



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

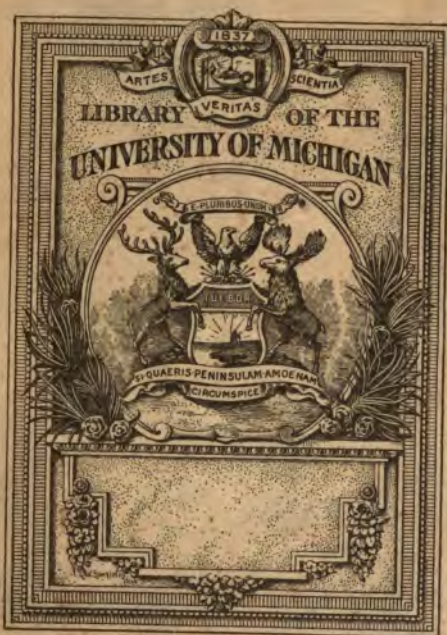
Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>



22/

828
C771

115

ANTE BELLUM.

45-13-5-

SOUTHERN LIFE AS IT WAS.

BY

(MARY LENNOX. *presid*)
Mrs Mary Louise Cook.



PHILADELPHIA:

J. B. LIPPINCOTT & CO.

1868.

Entered, according to the Act of Congress, in the year 1868, by

J. B. LIPPINCOTT & CO.,

**In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States in and for
the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.**

TO
THE FRIENDS OF THE SOUTH
THESE PAGES
ARE AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED.



PREFACE.

A GENEROUS enemy will forgive us for taking a retrospective view of scenes that in a few years will fade from our memories; and although they may consider these home pictures too highly colored by a prejudiced hand, you, my friends, will recognize the accuracy of the drawing, and cast with me one last, fond, lingering look on our Southern homes as they existed before the red hand of war made them desolate. If the sentiments expressed in these pages should give offense to any, it must be remembered that they only indicate in a slight degree that feeling which helped to bring about the long and bloody war; and as it was my desire to adhere strictly to facts, I have been compelled to slightly introduce a trite subject. With the hope that these truthful sketches of Southern life may divert for a brief season your thoughts from the dull monotony of the present gloomy state of our country, as they have mine, I cast forth upon the uncertain billows this frail bark freighted with delightful memories of the happy past.

MARY LENNOX.

COLUMBUS, GA., July 15th, 1867.



CONTENTS.

	PAGE
CHAPTER I	9
CHAPTER II.....	19
CHAPTER III.....	30
CHAPTER IV.....	44
CHAPTER V.....	60
CHAPTER VI.....	74
CHAPTER VII	87
CHAPTER VIII.....	103
CHAPTER IX.....	118
CHAPTER X.....	130
CHAPTER XI.....	138
CHAPTER XII	149
CHAPTER XIII.....	165
CHAPTER XIV.....	178
CHAPTER XV.....	196
CHAPTER XVI.....	208
CHAPTER XVII.....	226
CHAPTER XVIII.....	236
CHAPTER XIX.....	248
CHAPTER XX.....	258
CHAPTER XXI.....	270
CHAPTER XXII.....	280
CHAPTER XXIII.....	288
CHAPTER XXIV	298
CHAPTER XXV.....	309

ANTE BELLUM.

CHAPTER I.

Good God! to think upon a child
That has no childish days,
No careless play, no frolics wild,
No words of prayer and praise!

IN the beautiful South, on the eastern bank of the Chattahoochee, where the tall pines like stalwart grenadiers of the forest rear their green-crested heads far into the blue vaulted canopy above, and the magnolias bow their royal diadems over the modest violet, there is a lovely bower, formed by a jasminé-vine, which twines itself around the wide-spreading arms of a gnarled oak.

From its trailing branches the sweet, golden bells are continually dropping into the flowing stream, where they whirl awhile in a merry waltz, then glide swiftly on, disappearing from sight in the distant waters.

Nature has lavished her rarest gifts to adorn this beautiful spot, where fairy queens were supposed to hold their courts and revel in gorgeous splendor.

Such, indeed, was the opinion of a little blue-eyed girl of scarcely ten summers, who sat upon the moss-covered root beneath that shady bower, plying, with wonderful industry, her needle through a coarse garment of homespun cloth.

She was a child of rare beauty, with lustrous, pleading eyes, in whose depths one might read the purity of her

heart and soul. The face was exquisitely delicate—her eyebrows arched, her forehead broad and clear. Strange and unnatural as it may appear, there was a look of habitual sadness, mingled with patience and gentleness, in the child's face, which appealed touchingly to the heart of the spectator.

Her soft, dark-brown hair, which a mother's loving hand would have twined into graceful ringlets, was hanging in a thick, wavy mass over neck and shoulders of exquisite mould and whiteness. Her dress was originally black, but time had converted it into a dingy, lusterless hue.

Look into the unfathomed depths of those dark-blue eyes, and read the great and fearful sorrow which is brooding over her young heart.

She is an orphan! and the iron chain of dependence has bound her to a cold, stern, heartless woman, who cares only for the work her little hands may do.

It is sad to see the bright and cheerful spirit of a child crushed and broken—to see it thirsting for sympathy—hungering for affection—drooping—dying—like some sweet flower that pines for the dew and sunlight of heaven.

Could I appeal to the world in behalf of orphan children, I would ask neither gold nor silver—but kind and loving words for the desolate ones, which would fall like manna from heaven on their poor wounded hearts; then they would go forth with renewed strength to battle with the world, and make better men and women. They would bless and ask blessings on those who gave the pleasant words which came like refreshing waters to the weary pilgrim.

“Blessings upon the little children, for of such as they are is the kingdom of heaven!”

“A happy childhood,” said Isaac Taylor, “is a precious inheritance, with which, as a fund, to begin trading in a practical wisdom and active usefulness. It is a great thing

only to have known by experience that tranquil, temperate happiness is actually attainable on earth; and we should think so if we knew how many have pursued a reckless course, because, or chiefly because, they early learned to think of happiness as a chimera, and believed momentary gratifications to be the only substitute placed within the reach of man. Practical happiness is much oftener thrown away than snatched from us; but it is the most likely to be pursued and overtaken, and husbanded by those who already, and during some considerable period of their lives, have been happy. To have known nothing but misery is the most portentous condition under which human nature can start on its course."

Nervously the little orphan's fingers continued their task, only stopping occasionally to brush from her eyelids the tear-drops that refused to be forced back upon her burning brain.

But hark! There comes from her lips a sound soft and low, but sadly sweet, like the soft tones of the *Zanaida* dove, or the last plaintive notes of the dying swan. She is trilling forth the words of that favorite little song—

There is a happy land,
Far, far, away—
Where saints in glory stand,
Bright, bright as day;
Oh! we shall happy be,
When from sin and sorrow free,
Lord, we shall dwell with thee,
Dwell, dwell for aye!

With touching sweetness these beautiful words strike the ear, as the melody mingles with the flowing waters and the dreary moan of the lofty pines.

So absorbed had she been with her work while singing, that the approach of a handsome youth of fifteen, with his gun and dog, had failed to attract her notice.

Stepping softly aside, he took the gun from his shoulder and placed it against a tree; then giving a whispered command to the intelligent-looking dog, who immediately crouched himself on the ground to watch every motion of his master, as he stood with folded arms, gazing intently on the lovely child. Not until the last echo of her sweet, sad song was borne away, did he emerge from his retreat.

Taking the hunting-cap from his head and brushing the soft black curls from his brow, he advanced toward her.

Hearing footsteps, she looked up in alarm, and met his laughing eyes bent inquiringly upon her. Like a startled gazelle she was about to fly from his presence, when he gently caught her hand, and in the mock heroic style which is so often assumed by youths in speaking to those of inferior age, said:

"Stay, sweet fairy! and tell me from what radiant sphere thou comest, with those melting azure eyes, and the voice that fell on my ear like the gentle vibrations of an angel's harp?"

With a look of mild reproof, she quickly replied:

"It's wrong for you to speak so! for no song on earth is equal to the angels, with their golden harps."

A blush suffused itself over his face at this gentle rebuke—he saw the compliment did not please her; then said:

"Tell me your name, and why you have strayed into this beautiful bower? Does your mother allow you to ramble off so far from home?"

"I have no mother or father—I am all alone—with no one to love me!" she replied, as the tears rushed to her eyes; "and Mrs. Grant does not care where I go, if I finish my work. I love to sit in this pretty bower, for the birds all know me, and while I sew they sing and twitter in the trees, and I don't feel so lonely here as I do at the house, where everybody is too busy to talk to me. But I must

go on with my work, for she will be very angry if it is not finished when I go back to the house "

"She will not dare to punish you if it is not done," said the youth, his eyes flashing with anger, as he observed her troubled look.

"Oh! she will be very cross, and scold me terribly, and will not let me come here again soon. I do wish she would not scold me so much; it makes my head ache, and often-times my heart seems to swell and swell until I'm afraid it will break. Do *you* think hearts can break?"

"Yes, indeed, poor child!"

"Nobody was ever cross to me until mamma died. I try—oh! so hard—to please Mrs. Grant, for it's very kind in her to let me stay at her house. If she did not, I would have to live in the woods, and feed on nuts and berries like the little birds and squirrels."

"Dear little girl, I think you would fare much better out here with the birds, than you do with that blue-lipped dragon over yonder hill," was the youth's rejoinder.

Turning her head suddenly, the child remarked:

"What a beautiful dog! how I should like to have a romp with him, if I had time. Tell me his name, and let me call him, won't you?"

"Tasso is his name—call him, and let him sit at your feet while you finish that horrid task."

"Tasso! Tasso!—what a pretty name!" she exclaimed, as he came forward. She patted his glossy brown head, and for a moment wound her white arm caressingly about his neck.

"If I only had *you* to love me, pretty dog, I would not feel so lonely; but I cannot even have a dog's love now. I know you think me a silly little girl," she continued, looking up, with tears in her eyes, "but this affectionate creature reminds me so much of my poor Rolla, and his sad death, that I cannot keep back my tears."

"Indeed I do not, but I think you an affectionate sweet child—much too good to be tyrannized over by that hateful old virago, Mrs. Grant. Did she kill your dog?" he asked, hastily.

"Why, how strangely you talk! You musn't hate Mrs. Grant—I'm sure you have no reason to do so. She did not kill my dog; but she is a person who is fond of keeping a nice, clean house, and poor Rolla would follow me everywhere I went, and leave his tracks all over her clean floors; then she said she would not stand it any longer, and told me to make some of the negroes carry him off, where she could not see him again. He was my papa's dog, and all that I had to love me in the wide world, so I could not bear to send him away, but I begged one of the women to keep him down at her house. She promised to do this, and for a long time kept him tied; but whenever he could get loose, he would run back to the house, and howl and whine until he could find me. This vexed Mrs. Grant so much that she told one of the negro men if he let the dog trouble her any more she would make the overseer punish him severely. So one day, as I was coming here, I saw my poor old Rolla lying dead in a ravine."

"The hateful old wretch! If she was a man I—I would make her wish that she never saw a dog,—but where is her husband? Is he a bird of the same feather?"

"She has no husband; he died long before I came to her house."

"I would bet my head she *worried* him to death, if she did not kill him some other way. She is not too good to do it, I will venture to assert. But," he added, "you have not yet told me your name?"

"Lula Graham is my name. I was christened Louise, but my little brother in trying to call me lisped out 'Lula'—and it sounded so sweetly from his baby lips that papa

and mamma always called me that afterward. But it is getting so late I must go to the house now," she added, hastily rising.

"For Heaven's sake! Stop one moment, and tell me if your father was William Graham, of Charleston?"

"Yes, that was my papa's name, and he lived in Charleston when I was a little girl."

"Found at last! Great God, I thank thee!" fervently ejaculated the youth, as he clasped the astonished child to his bosom—then he added:

"Yes, sweet child, I knew your father and mother, and loved them dearly when I was a little boy; and you too, my precious pet! my little darling! I have caressed and fondled by the hour, never tiring of your winning ways, or of watching the pure, holy light that shone from your soft blue eyes. I used to look into them and think that such were the angels' in heaven. Lula, have you no curiosity to know who I am? Have you ever heard of Mary Herbert?"

"Why, yes indeed! She was my mamma's adopted sister, and was so good and beautiful. Mamma said, when she kissed me the last time, if she could only leave me with dear Aunt Mary she would die happy. If you know Mrs. Herbert, please take me to her. I know she will love me for mamma's sake!" she cried, eagerly.

"Mrs. Herbert is my mother, and I promise that she will not only love you for your mamma's sake, but for your own also."

"Are you *really* Charlie Herbert?" she asked, looking doubtfully into his face.

"Yes, that is my name; why do you doubt me?"

"Oh! it seems almost too much to believe! I have prayed day and night to see dear Aunt Mary; and sometimes in my dreams she comes, and whispers my name so sweetly, and calls me her darling, as mamma did. Please

don't deceive me—it will be too cruel—but tell me truly, can I see her? Can I go to her? *Now?*”

“Yes, my little Birdie! Just as soon as she can catch you, she will put you in a cage so bright and pretty that you will never wish to wander in the woods to eat nuts and berries with the birds and squirrels again. In a few hours you will be out of the clutches of the old dragon. We will take you to our home, to love you, and take care of you always—and you shall never, never go away again to live with horrid, cross people, and never be obliged to work for them any more.”

“Oh! I shall be so happy! And you will be a dear, good brother to me, and I shall love you all so much!”

Thus she chatted, regardless of the flight of time, until suddenly it occurred to her that she would delay Mrs. Herbert's coming. Charlie promised to take his mother to Mrs. Grant's as soon as possible, and after a hasty leave-taking, Lula ran, with a heart almost bursting with happiness, to the house.

On the brow of the hill which overlooked the river the brick mansion of Mrs. Grant stood, frowning with lurid glare as the hot, noonday sun shone fiercely against its broad, red surface. Its closed shutters and freedom from outward adornment was typical of the misanthropical and selfish nature of its mistress, who could never see beauty in any flower or shrub save a cotton bloom, corn tassel, or some bearded grain that promised to bring forth an abundant harvest by which her coffers might be filled. When Ceres vouchsafed a bountiful yield from the broad acres, the happiness of the mistress was complete; but should the seasons prove unpropitious, her discontent would vent itself upon the sturdy laborers, by short rations and scanty clothing, until the fickle goddess reversed her decree and filled the barns with her golden fruits and fleecy lint.

As the little orphan ran hastily toward the house, an

old negress appeared at the window of her cabin, and said:

"Run fast, honey! She's been calling for you 'long time. She's done eat her dinner, and she's as mad as a March hare, 'cause you wa'n't there in time. Bless de Lord, an' be quick, poor chile!"

On meeting Mrs. Grant, Lula was severely reprimanded for her long stay, and by way of punishment was ordered to take another piece of work into her cheerless little room, and remain there without her dinner during the long, sultry afternoon. In vain did the poor orphan endeavor to explain the cause of her protracted stay. But at this Mrs. Grant's small stock of patience seemed to exhaust itself. She refused to let her see Mrs. Herbert, and said:

"If she comes here on any such errand, she will be very much disappointed. No one has the power to take you out of my hands, after I have supported you for nearly two years, just as you are getting old enough to earn your salt."

Lula burst into a passionate flood of tears, and fell at the feet of her heartless companion. She refused to leave the spot unless Mrs. Grant gave her permission to see Mrs. Herbert.

This conduct from the hitherto docile child was too much for the enraged termagant. Her anger was truly appalling, and the rage depicted in her face would have subdued the sisterly trio, Alecto, Megara, and Tisiphone, in their most terrific wrath, as with her foot she spurned the kneeling form of the pleading child, and commanded her to leave the room.

But Lula was immovable; despair had suddenly transformed her gentle nature—and with determined resistance she continued to kneel and implore, perfectly regardless of the cruel woman's threats.

Poor little orphan—sweet innocent child! Is there

another mortal with heart so hard, who could look on thy prostrate form, and listen to thy pleading voice, and not pity, and forgive the first act of willful disobedience? That look of agony and wild despair is enough to melt the heart of Zeno's sternest disciple.

Mrs. Grant looked for a moment with speechless astonishment on her pleading victim, then seizing her hand, dragged her to the dark and dreary little room, rudely pushed her in and locked the door. A loud heart-rending scream escaped from the imprisoned child, and struck terror into the sympathizing hearts of every servant about the house. Then a heavy fall was heard in the room, and all was still and silent as the grave, as Mrs. Grant turned away with a look of determined vengeance upon her flushed and angry face.

Oh, woman! why will you ever leave your proper sphere, where gentleness, love, and harmony should exist, to don a masculine nature, give vent to violent passions, render yourself an object of dislike, and sacrifice the delicacy and refinement that charms and renders you attractive to friends, and commands the regard and admiration of enemies!

Oh, it is sad! it is terrible! to witness the rage of a vindictive woman when passion has crushed every human feeling from her heart. The fury of the combined elements is rather to be endured than this unsightly object, which appalls, and apparently turns into stone all who look upon it, as if it were Medusa with her hissing serpents, enormous teeth, and brazen claws.

The servants had often looked with indifference on their mistress when swayed by fits of passion, but in this instance they quaked with fear, and gazed with speechless wonder and awe on the angry woman, as every violent feeling was brought into action, and they trembled for the safety of the little orphan.

CHAPTER II.

Oh! stranger, scatter roses,
And slips of cypress burn,—
A broken heart reposes
Within this silent urn.

MANY years ago the names of Wilmot and Seaton were known as belonging to one of the largest and most influential mercantile houses in the City of Charleston, South Carolina.

This firm was at length dissolved by the death of Mr. Seaton; his wife died a few days after, leaving their only child, Mary, to the care of Colonel and Mrs. Wilmot. The husband and wife were victims of that dreadful scourge which sometimes decimates the Southern seaport towns and cities.

Colonel and Mrs. Wilmot welcomed Mary as their own, and so beautifully were the ties of parent and child portrayed between them, that but for the name she bore none would have supposed her an orphan.

Their own daughter, who was several years younger, loved the little stranger with a pure and disinterested affection rarely seen, and in her childish imagination Mary was a model of beauty and perfection, and to emulate the character of "my sister" was the acme of little Louise Wilmot's hopes.

Years had strengthened this bond of love; and the first real sorrow known in that happy household was when young Walter Herbert, a distinguished lawyer and wealthy planter, led the lovely and accomplished Mary Seaton a blushing bride from her happy home.

Louise Wilmot, the idol of her parents, and beloved by all who knew her, fulfilled every promise of her childhood, and became a woman of exquisite beauty and rare mental endowments.

Her gentle, unassuming manners, her superior accomplishments, without an effort at display, won the admiration of every heart.

When she gave her heart and hand to William Graham, and resigned herself into his keeping, it was said that she had chosen wisely and well, for in every respect he was her equal.

In this marriage her parents felt that they had not lost their daughter, but had gained a son who was worthy of their confidence and love. Under the same roof they became a united and happy family.

After years of contented enjoyment in their luxurious home, Mrs. Wilmot, the presiding genius of that bright and happy Eden, died.

Her husband bent beneath the chastening blow. For almost a half century they had walked together, hand in hand, through the checkered scenes of life; and now, as though prematurely old, he would totter daily, with staff in hand, to kneel and pray beside the last resting-place of his wife.

The vine that has for ages clung and imbedded itself into the trunk of the oak, when torn roughly away will tear and wound the tree, leaving its vital parts exposed to the stormy blast of winter and scorching suns of summer, which must at last cause it to wither and die.

Thus, day after day, the step of the feeble old man slackened, and at last he fell asleep, to wake no more, until—

Through the world the awful call is sounded,
Wake, O ye dead—to judgment wake, ye dead.

Soon after this sad event, Mr. and Mrs. Herbert determined to visit Europe, and to remain there several years. This they accordingly did, leaving their friends, the Grahams, in possession of health and every luxury that wealth could procure.

But, alas ! through treachery and misfortune, Mr. Graham suddenly became insolvent. With the consent of his wife, he decided to dispose of their vast estate, in order to meet his liabilities, and then seek employment and a location elsewhere.

From his well-known integrity and capacity for business, he was soon enabled to make suitable arrangements, and shortly afterward commenced operations in the City of Mobile.

As soon as Walter Herbert became aware of his friend's misfortunes he offered pecuniary assistance; but Mr. Graham refused to accept aid from any one, never doubting his own ability to retrieve his fallen fortunes. In their more humble dwelling his wife and children were cheerful and contented—these he considered his greatest treasures, and he confidently looked forward to the time when they should possess a home equal in elegance to the one they had left.

It was, however, a beautiful sight to witness the quiet happiness of their now retired sphere. To see the gifted mother and lovely children, with bright and cheerful faces, watching and waiting to welcome the dear husband and father.

There the proud and happy man would rest his weary frame and overtaxed brain, leaving all cares behind him, and devote himself to the amusement and instruction of the loved ones.

It was not long before these devoted parents were called upon to restore one of their precious little ones to Him who gave them.

After a short and distressing illness, their first-born, the darling little Willie, was taken to his home on high—

His happy home beyond the sky.

Though it was like tearing asunder every fiber of their hearts, they bowed humbly, and kissed the rod that smote them, and exclaimed, in the language of Job, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord!"

Mr. Graham had endeavored to keep his creditors in ignorance of his residence, until he should have it in his power to settle every demand against him. That time at length arrived, the last debt was canceled, and he felt himself once more a free and independent man.

When this was accomplished, he wrote frequently to apprise Mr. Herbert of his residence in Mobile. But as that gentleman had returned from Europe and made his home in Georgia, the letters were never received. Pained and mortified by the apparent neglect of his friend, William Graham, like all sensitive natures which have experienced such reverses of fortune, became sadly suspicious of friendships, and made no further effort to attract his notice.

It was not so, however, with Mrs. Graham. She, with woman's unerring instinct, read truly the hearts of their friends, and attributed their silence to the real cause. She knew, too well, the heart of Mary Herbert, to believe for a moment that any change of fortune could alienate her affections, and anxiously looked forward to the time when she would meet her heart's sister, and with a mother's pride exhibit her pearl above price—her darling little Lula.

But, alas! just as their star began to rise again and throw its brightening rays over the gloomy past, Mr. Graham's partner, in an unguarded moment, placed the names of the firm as securities on a note for a large amount. As he had unbounded confidence in the parties for whom the

arrangement was made, he scarcely gave it a second thought, until informed that the principal had absconded and left them the note to pay.

Thus—by a strange freak of the fickle goddess—Mr. Graham was again insolvent; the innocent victim of another's treachery. The terrible shock occasioned a violent hemorrhage from the lungs, which soon resulted in his death.

Mrs. Graham had passed through a fiery ordeal of affliction; but her trust was in God, the friend of the widow and orphan.

For He can heal the broken heart,
Which, like the plants that throw
Their fragrance from the wounded part,
Breathe sweetness out of woe.

She roused herself to action, and did what she knew her honorable, high-minded husband would have done, and resigned everything they possessed to meet the demands against them.

She then sought employment as a music-teacher. Her ability as a musician was well known among her friends and acquaintances, and she soon found sufficient occupation.

After the lapse of a few months, a more lucrative offer was made her of a situation as teacher near the spot where we found her child, the little Lula, which was accepted.

And here, with unswerving perseverance, she continued to pursue her vocation, regardless of health and strength, until close application and confinement began the work of destruction. She was then reluctantly compelled to resign her charge and seek the country air, with the hope that rest and balmy breezes might restore her exhausted nature.

In the spring, when the hilltops and meadows were dressed in their emerald robes, and bright flowers filled the

air with delightful perfumes, Mrs. Graham engaged board for the summer with Mrs. Grant.

Day after day the fatal hectic flush deepened its roseate hue on her cheeks—

And giving a tinge to her icy lips,
Like the crimson rose's brightest tips.

Her hollow cough echoed through the still hours of the night—

Her eyes still beamed unwonted fires
With a mother's love and a saint's desires;
And her last, fond, lingering look is given
To the love she leaves, and then to heaven—
As if she would bear that love away
To a purer world and a brighter day.

Before the summer flowers were chilled by the autumn winds, the poor storm-tossed wanderer "slept her last sleep" beneath the clods of the valley.

She died as she had lived, trusting in the promises of the blessed gospel.

Although poor, and destitute of worldly treasure, she felt that she had a home on high—a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, where no sighs are wrung from wounded hearts, and no farewell tears are shed.

We would not recall the sainted dead, or murmur at the release of her heaven-bound spirit; but we sigh to think that the innocent heart of her child may become hardened by unkindness and neglect; and the good seed implanted by a mother's care may wither and perish in the chilly atmosphere of apathy which surrounds her.

Mrs. Grant was not entirely callous to the opinion of her neighbors, and did not close her doors against the little orphan, as she really felt inclined to do, but decided to let her remain for the present an inmate of the house. She soon perceived that Lula was intelligent beyond her years,

and that errands performed by her were better executed than when done by a servant. She had learnt to have confidence also in the child's honesty, and would intrust her with the keys of her store-room and other domestic offices where the negroes were not allowed to enter. So by degrees the gentle girl became necessary to the convenience and comfort of Mrs. Grant, who daily tightened the chain of bondage; and the perpetual scolding and fault-finding of this stern, heartless woman, had well-nigh crushed the once free and joyous spirit of the little orphan.

In the afternoon of the day of Lula's meeting with Charlie Herbert, Mrs. Grant sat on the front gallery of her house, shelling dried beans. So cold and hard was the expression of her sallow face, that, but for the rapid movement of her hands, one might have supposed her some statue, fashioned by Pluto to represent the "Iron Age."

A carriage was seen approaching the house—and very soon, Charlie Herbert, accompanied by an elegantly dressed lady, presented themselves before Mrs. Grant.

She wished to appear unconscious of their presence, and did not raise her head until the lady, in a pleasant voice, said :

"I presume this is Mrs. Grant?"

"That is my name," she replied, scarcely glancing toward her visitor.

"I am Mrs. Herbert, the adopted sister of Mrs. Graham, who, I regret to learn, died some time since at this place. My absence from the United States for several years has prevented me from knowing anything in regard to her sad fate until a few hours since. My son met her little daughter, accidentally, this morning, and she informed him of her mother's death. This child, I learn, is a member of your household, and I am, as you must imagine, most anxious to see her, and as soon as possible."

This Mrs. Herbert said, seating herself, notwithstanding-

ing her unwilling hostess had neglected to extend to her this common courtesy.

"You can't see her," was the curt reply.

"Why not?" asked Mrs. Herbert, in astonishment.

"Because the child is out of the way, and I have something else to do besides running about to look her up."

"Let me go and find her!" exclaimed Charlie, rising hastily from his seat.

"Young man, I guess you had better keep quiet! Don't presume to interfere with my authority here," she angrily replied.

"How long shall we probably be detained before seeing her?" calmly asked Mrs. Herbert, before Charlie could answer.

"You won't see her to-day, madam!" was the stern rejoinder.

"Mrs. Grant, the child has certainly mentioned to you her meeting with my son this morning, and his promise that I would call for her this afternoon. You surely cannot doubt the connection existing between myself and Mrs. Graham's child, nor the claim I have upon her, and must thus recognize me as her proper guardian."

"I recognize no such right; and if you get her out of my house you must *prove* your right before a court of justice," said Mrs. Grant, stooping calmly to take up another handful of beans; then she added:

"If Mrs. Graham had intended you to have her child, she would have said so; but as she did not, and there is no tie of relationship between you, I shall keep the little girl, as she was left with me, and I will teach her to support herself better than her mother did, by drumming on the piano. I have supported her for nearly two years, and am not silly enough to give her up to the first person who may fancy her, just as the puny thing is getting strong enough to work and pay me for my trouble."

"Great God, forbid it!" exclaimed Charlie, quickly; then added: "How silly I was to leave the poor child this morning! I could have carried her home so easily!"

"And been prosecuted for kidnapping afterward," Mrs. Grant savagely answered.

"My son, leave me to manage this affair with Mrs. Grant; she will listen to reason, I have no doubt; and will soon find that my legal claim to the child can readily be established."

Then Mrs. Herbert, with a great effort to appear calm, gave a history of her connection with Mrs. Graham's family, and endeavored to explain why all communication had ceased between them. Furthermore, that every effort made by Mr. Herbert to hear of the Grahams had been unsuccessful, until within a few weeks past, a package of letters (some of them written by Mr. and Mrs. Graham from Mobile), which had recrossed the Atlantic, was received. "Upon the reception of these letters," continued the lady, "Mr. Herbert left immediately for Mobile, and has not yet returned."

"All that goes to prove nothing, except that if Mrs. Graham had felt that she had any claim on your charity, she would have hunted you up, instead of coming to me in her distress. Therefore, say no more about it. I shall keep her child," stoutly replied Mrs. Grant.

"Perhaps, if you would take the trouble to search among her papers, we may find out *her* wishes in regard to her daughter. If you will allow me, I shall be glad to assist you, and the question may be decided immediately."

"I shan't attempt to hunt among her trumpery for a thing that does not exist; besides, if a letter were found expressing any such desire, the simple fact of her not sending it, or ordering it to be sent, would go to prove that she doubted the propriety of the step, since you had neglected her so long."

"Mrs. Grant, it is not necessary for me to repeat what I have said in regard to our sojourn in Europe and final settlement in this vicinity, to convince you that Mrs. Graham was ignorant of our address; hence her inability to communicate with us by letter. It is too absurd to deny me the privilege, at least, of seeing the orphan child of my dearly-beloved and precious Louise. To me she belongs, and to no one will I yield my claim. Oh! Mrs. Grant—be just, and let me have the dear child! I was not prepared for this emergency." And Mrs. Herbert buried her face in her handkerchief and wept.

Charlie was so indignant that he could no longer control himself, and taking advantage of his mother's silence, he said:

"Mrs. Grant, your conduct is utterly heartless and unbecoming a lady! If I were a man, I would have you arraigned before the county court for your harsh treatment of that innocent child. I know, if the matter was thoroughly investigated, that any jury in the State would find a true bill against you."

"Young man, hold your tongue! your impertinence is beneath my notice."

Then turning to Mrs. Herbert, and rising from her seat, she said:

"Madam, business requires my attention elsewhere. You have heard my decision; I shall keep the little girl."

Mrs. Herbert continued to plead, but in vain. Every inquiry in regard to Lula's place of refuge was insultingly replied to, and at length the perplexed and disappointed lady determined to leave, and await her husband's return before making another application for the orphan child.

"Oh, Charlie," she cried, as they were again seated in the carriage, "I feel as if I could scarcely tear myself from this house, and leave the little angel exposed to the wrath of that cruel and unjust woman! Oh! the thought of Louise

Wilmot, the beautiful and admired belle, the indulged and beloved daughter of devoted parents who anticipated and granted every wish of her gentle heart before it was uttered, toiling day after day for the bread of life, is positively maddening! But more horrible still is the knowledge that her innocent, helpless orphan is held in bondage by this godless woman, who, in my fears for the child's safety, appears a modern type of the Roman Agrippina! Poor suffering darling! No effort shall be spared to save her from a life of such misery and degradation."

Thus conversing, they drove rapidly homeward; Charlie-endavoring to forget his indignation and contempt for that "hateful ogress," as he was pleased to denominate Mrs. Grant, in making delightful plans for the future; which though bright to him before, had to-day received an additional touch of beauty and sunshine, in the happy thought that the lovely little Lula—discovered, too, through *his* instrumentality (that thought how precious to his boy's heart!)—*might* henceforth be his companion and sister "forever and always," as he pronounced in joyous superlative. In building glorious "Chateaux en Espagne," of which he and Lula were ever the charming and fortunate occupants.

CHAPTER III.

'Tis a little thing
To give a cup of water! yet its draught
Of cool refreshment, drained by fevered lips,
May give a shock of pleasure to the frame
More exquisite than where nectarian juice
Renews the life of joy in happier hours.

MR. HERBERT returned, fortunately, the same evening of his wife's visit; and at an early hour the following day they rang the bell at the door of Mrs. Grant's inhospitable mansion. A servant met them, and in reply to the inquiry for Mrs. Grant and Lula Graham, she said:

"Mist'es has gone to town, and Miss Lula's mighty sick, ma'am, though mist'es didn't seem to b'lieve it when she went off. The poor chile done gone clean out of her head, and keeps on talking 'bout her pa' and ma', and de angels, and eber so many folks, dat I don't know nothing 'bout."

"For pity's sake take us to the dear child immediately!" cried Mrs. Herbert, in alarm.

"I'm mighty 'fraid mist'es won't like it if I do, ma'am, but I wish somebody would do something for the sweet cre'tar', for I've done all *I* could," said the girl, with tears in her eyes.

"Lead the way instantly!" commanded Mr. Herbert, in a tone which plainly indicated that he would be obeyed.

The girl accordingly turned to do so, notwithstanding the dissenting looks and sly winks of a fellow-servant, who muttered, as they passed:

"You'd better not!"

"I will, if she kills me for it!" was the stout reply,—

and they were forthwith conducted through the hall into a little "shed" room, which seemed to be more of a lumber-closet than a sleeping apartment. There were piled in one corner a number of hamper-baskets with their crevices filled with cotton-lint, some garden implements in another, while a heap of unwashed wool occupied a conspicuous place, and filled the confined space with its noxious odor.

For a moment Mrs. Herbert drew back in disgust; but the low murmur of the suffering child reached her ear, and caused her to enter hastily and approach the rude cot, on which the little orphan lay, with her face fearfully crimsoned, and the swollen veins throbbing wildly on her burning brow.

"Oh! mamma, dear mamma! have you come for your little darling at last?" the child cried in delirium, as Mrs. Herbert bent over and kissed her parched lips. "Why did you leave me all alone, with no one to love me? Take me with you, dear mamma! don't leave your poor little girl again. Be quick—quick, before Mrs. Grant comes, for she will not let me go;" and she threw her arms around Mrs. Herbert, and clung convulsively to her neck.

Mr. Herbert had followed his wife into the apartment, and witnessed with strong emotion this touching scene—then he came forward and gently unclasped her little arms. As he did so the sick child uttered a low, piercing wail, and looked fearfully up into his face; then meeting his kind, paternal glance, a change instantly came over her face, and she sweetly murmured:

"You too, papa?" and fell back exhausted in his arms. He laid her tenderly on the pillow, and kissed her fevered cheek, then wiping the tears from his eyes, hurriedly left the room to dispatch his servant for a physician.

In the interim Mrs. Herbert called for fresh water, and gently applied the cooling liquid to the burning face and hands of the child. With the aid of the servant-girl Sally,

who was willing to brave the anger of her mistress if she could add to the comfort of the little sufferer, the room was soon made a little more habitable.

"Oh! mamma, how the sun scorches to-day!—it almost sets my brain on fire! When you came in I was wishing I could throw myself into the beautiful river, where you said the red warriors bathed their dusky forms long ago. I wanted to float away on the bosom of the stream, far, far away, with no housetop to hide the bright sky from my sight,—where the angels' wings could cool my hot head. You told me, mamma, that God was everywhere; that his holy angels would watch over me; but I'm afraid, mamma, they don't love *this* place, and won't take care of me if you leave me again," the child said, in hurried, feverish accents.

"Yes, darling, God *is* everywhere; he is watching you now, and I hope will soon make my precious little Lula well again. Do not fear, I shall not leave you, my dear child. Try and rest quietly now," replied Mrs. Herbert, as she continued to bathe the throbbing brow.

When Mrs. Grant returned and found her house in confusion, with the servants hurrying to and fro, eager to obey every command of Mrs. Herbert, her indignation knew no bounds. With flashing eyes and lowering brow, which betokened a coming storm, she entered the sick-chamber.

For awhile, the fierce tirade of abuse which fell from the lips of the virago was unheeded by her auditors, as Lula had fainted away at the first sight of her angry face. Mrs. Herbert feared that life was extinct, and devoted all of her energies to resuscitate the apparently lifeless form.

Mr. Herbert was impatiently pacing up and down the hall, awaiting the arrival of the physician, when the loud, coarse voice of the mistress of the mansion attracted his attention. He immediately entered the little room, and, approaching Mrs. Grant, said, with an expression of stern calmness:

"Madam, as to intruding ourselves into your house, surely the sight of that suffering orphan child is a sufficient apology; common humanity, if no other motive, would have prompted us to act as we have done—there was no choice left to us in the matter."

We must do Mrs. Grant the justice to say, that she had been so blinded by passion as scarcely to give a glance or thought to Lula, the innocent cause of all her fury; but had directed both attention and speech principally toward Mrs. Herbert, as the offender and intruder upon her domain. As she looked now upon the child, and saw the fearful change which a few hours had wrought in her appearance, the savage eyes quailed for a moment, and she was silenced. But she soon recovered herself, as she felt the stern gaze of Mr. Herbert fixed upon her, as well as the curious glances of her servants, and remarked:

"It's only a scene the artful little thing has gotten up to suit the occasion."

The arrival of the physician prevented any reply to this heartless speech; and Mrs. Grant, finding that her presence and fierce harangue had alike failed to produce the desired effect, indignantly left the room. The physician who entered was a person of striking appearance; he was above the middle height, with dark hair and eyes; his face was handsome, and indicated intelligence and gentleness; while his air and manner belonged unmistakably to a thoroughbred gentleman. He advanced courteously toward Mr. Herbert, and gave his name as Dr. Clinton.

As he stood by the bedside of the sick child, and watched the alarming symptoms, her new friends felt confident that if medical skill could save her from speedy death, he possessed that power.

Mrs. Herbert had been informed by the servants of the unhappy contest between Mrs. Grant and Lula on the preceding day, and justly ascribed the child's illness to that

cause. Dr. Clinton concurred with her in this opinion, and decided that the attack was produced by the continued system of tyranny and harsh treatment upon the sensitive nature of the little orphan.

"I will not be responsible," he said, "for the consequences, if my gentle patient is left in charge of this modern Xantippe; for I am too well acquainted with her peculiar temperament, to stake my reputation as a physician, where she has the privilege of interfering. Besides, this child should not again be exposed to the pernicious effects of her ungovernable fury; for tender nursing is more essential in her case than medical treatment. I hope, my dear madam, you feel sufficient interest in the little orphan, to protect her from this callous-hearted personage?"

"She is very dear to me, and I shall not leave her exposed to the baneful influence of Mrs. Grant's temper for the future," was the reply.

When the mistress of the house became aware of the intention of the Herberts to remain under her roof as Lula's guardians, she was unable to find in her vocabulary words of sufficient strength to express her resentment; but when Dr. Clinton informed her that it was a matter of life and death, the storm raged with unmitigated fury.

"And *you* are abetting this artful little creature in playing off on the credulity of these people, for the purpose of extorting from them a heavy fee!" she cried, in deafening tones.

"Mrs. Grant, if in your anger you forget to act the lady, be assured I shall not forget the duty of a gentleman; therefore I shall listen no longer to your unprovoked insults;" then bowing formally to her, he left the room.

The tempest had well-nigh exhausted itself at the failure of every attempt to rid her house of the unbidden guests, and the virago sat with the look of a despairing and vanquished foe, revolving in her mind a change of tactics for

their egress, when Mr. Herbert again appeared before her and said:

"Mrs. Grant, as the friend of Mrs. Graham and the guardian of her child, I wish to inform you of my intention to liquidate every demand against the former, and to make you ample compensation for the trouble and expense of keeping the latter. As the child's situation will not admit of her removal, and we are necessarily compelled to remain in your house for awhile, you will, therefore, please consider us as your boarders, and any inconvenience we may occasion will be fully and willingly remunerated."

"I suppose what can't be helped must be endured," she replied, more graciously than she had spoken since they entered the house.

Mr. Herbert had instinctively read the character of this strange woman, and was right in supposing money to be the "open sesame" to her heart. At the altar of Mammon she worshiped, before no other shrine did she bend, and where her treasures were, there was her heart also. Every member of her household could vouch for the truth of the proverb: "He that is greedy of gain troubleth his own house." She had sacrificed comfort, friendship, conscience, and every social feeling, to the great Moloch. Although an immortal tongue had propounded the awful inquiry, which still re-echoes through the passing ages, "What shall it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" it fell unheeded upon her ear. She still sought

Gold! gold! gold! gold!
Bright and yellow, hard and cold,
Molten, graven, hammered, rolled,
Heavy to get, and light to hold.

Regardless of poor Lula's imminent peril, Mrs. Grant continued to pursue with unwearied zeal the rugged tenor of her way, hurrying and scolding her negroes for obe-

dience as well as disobedience. But they had long since become callous to her perpetual fault-finding, which produced as little effect as the whistling winds through the pine grove; it was heard, but not heeded. For what did it profit the poor creatures to work and drudge so unceasingly? Punishment fell alike on the faithful and unfaithful. "A bon chien il ne vient jamais un bon os." Therefore, under the vigilant eye of the mistress the negroes would work; but in her absence they would say: "When the cat is away, the mice will play," and literally they acted upon this principle.

One afternoon, as they kept watch by the bedside of the sick child, who was then sleeping under the influence of an opiate, Mr. Herbert said to Dr. Clinton:

"Can you tell me anything of Mrs. Grant's antecedents? She strikes me as a strange anomaly of our Southern social life."

"You are correct, I think, sir; a more complete amalgamation of the despot, chicaner, and miser could scarcely be found; such growth is seldom indigenous to our system, with its aristocratic tendencies and languid *insouciance*.

"Her history is well known to every old resident in this vicinity. Many years ago she came South as a teacher, and was engaged with her duties in one of the 'up-country' villages, where she met Mr. Grant, a newly-made widower, with one child, and by some power of bewitchment, she managed to inveigle the old man into matrimony. It was said he had been, formerly, very happy in his domestic relations, and fondly hoped for a renewal of that happiness in this, his second launch, upon the precarious sea-matrimonial. But she soon put to flight all these bright Utopian fancies, by the stern sway of her material scepter—remodeling his household, and establishing a new form of government—exactly the reverse of the mild and gentle discipline of her predecessor. Mr. Grant was a cheerful, good-

natured old man, fond of society, and much given to the bounteous hospitality of the Southerner; but this last quality was not in accordance with the economical ideas and habit of his new wife. So, rather than seat his guests before a solitary dish of pork and beans, or some such meager bill of fare, at the board where peace and generous plenty once so gratefully smiled, while the plump poultry, luscious fruit, and other delicacies were reserved for market, he finally succumbed to her indomitable will in this, as he did in everything else. His daughter, however, who had been tenderly nurtured from infancy, and was, withal, an indulged child, was not so easily subdued. She loved her father, and revered the memory of her mother, and stoutly contested every point, either of reform or encroachment on their rights. They lived in a state of continued warfare until Miss Grant married and left the house.

"The step-mother considered this a happy riddance, and from that time began to tighten the reins and enforce her iron rule so mercilessly that she at last succeeded in worrying the old man's life out of him.

"The strangest feature of the case, however, is that this reformer came South an inveterate abolitionist. In the family where she was first domesticated, she did not hesitate to express her sentiments, and asked permission to instruct the negroes. Their mistress replied, that she understood their peculiar characters best, and preferred teaching them herself. Notwithstanding this refusal, the meddlesome creature undertook the task, and, for several months, carried on her systems of enlightenment clandestinely. The result was, that the hitherto contented and faithful servants grew suddenly morose, disobedient, and unhappy. The cause became finally evident, and the teacher was given to understand that her presence was no longer desired, and she must seek another home. I suppose this unceremonious ejection acted as a warning—

trenching as it did upon her popularity and consequent pecuniary success, a very moving argument in her case, as you may imagine—and she did not try the experiment again; or, at least, it was not discovered. And now, this once bold abolitionist and *soi-disant* crusader against the evils of slavery, is a terror to the negroes, and is looked on with contempt by every person to whom her character is known."

"It is characteristic of this entire class of fanatics," remarked Mr. Herbert, in reply, "that their philanthropy is but seldom more than lip-service—it does not often reach their hearts, or interfere with their purses; when it does, a complete revolution in sentiment is frequently the result—forming rather an amusing exemplification of the meeting of extremes."

"I have observed that Northerners generally, when they become slaveowners, are harder taskmasters than Southerners," said Dr. Clinton

"It is no doubt owing to the fact, that at the North one or two servants will do the entire work of a large family," replied Mr. Herbert, "and it is quite natural for them to expect the same amount of labor from the negroes. But they soon find this a lamentable mistake, for one of their Irish or Northern 'helps' will accomplish more in one day than the naturally indolent negro will in two or three. With us, who understand them, they are seldom overtasked; but discord generally ensues, where two natures, so diametrically opposite as those of the Yankee and negro, are brought in contact."

* * * * *

Mrs. Herbert watched, with unceasing tenderness, the little sufferer, and many a bitter tear fell from her eyes at the touching pathos of the orphan's delirious murmurings. Her patience and gentleness during this illness had endeared her, if possible, still more to the hearts of her anx-

ious friends, and Mr. Herbert evinced for her an affectionate interest scarcely inferior to that displayed by his wife. Charlie's visits were frequent—bringing each day fresh flowers and luscious fruits, as though he would fain coax the sweet child into health by his tempting offerings. But what shall be said of the young physician who shared with the Herberts their constant vigil beside the orphan's couch; and, when worn with watching, they would seek repose, he would sit by her side through the silent night—note her uneasy slumber, and offer, with tender solicitude, the cooling draught to her parched lips? Was it, as Mrs. Grant in her bitter taunting had said, for the purpose of extorting a fee? or a desire to insure for himself the patronage and influence of the wealthy planter, that caused him to display such unwonted zeal in the fate of his little patient?

No! it was the pure and holy desire of a Christian to do the will of his Master. He required no compensation for his attention, save the approbation of his God. Often had this noble young man been known to keep his lonely watch beside the pauper's cot, where he was sure no reward could be his except the fervent "God bless you," which came gushing from the hearts of the friendless poor.

It was touching and beautiful in the extreme to behold the faith of Lula in the promises of the Bible. On one occasion, after the day's work was finished, and Mrs. Grant had retired for the night, an old negress came into the sick-chamber, and inquired in her broken, but kind manner concerning the welfare of the little sufferer; then, after a heavy sigh, she bowed her head close to the pillow, and said:

"If de good Lord see fit to take my little lamb to his bosom, would it like to go 'thout a single murmur?"

"Yes, Aunt Elsy; I am willing. 'The Lord is my Shepherd;' 'He will take care of me,'" she answered, faintly.

"Bless de Lord for dat 'surance, honey; but I hope he'll spare you to labor in his vineyard for many years to come," said the old woman, solemnly—then turning to Mrs. Herbert, she added:

"Dis chile's bin de g'ardi'n angel of dis plantation, and she's done more good wid her little Bible dan all of dem *circus* riders do in a lifetime wid their highfalutin talk dat poor nigger can't onderstand."

"But you all seem so busy, Aunt Elsy, I cannot imagine what time she could have found for reading to you," said Mrs. Herbert.

"Sure 'nough, ma'am, thar's no time weeky days, but when Sunday comes, an' mist'es goes to church an' leave de blessed chile to watch, an' pray too, if she like, she takes her little book and 'splains it so sweet to us, dat de road to heaven looks 'bout as plain as de path to dat wheat-field yonder."

"She is a dear, good girl, and you all must love her very much," said Mrs. Herbert, as she stooped to kiss Lula's little white face.

"Why, bless my life, ma'am, thar ain't a man, woman, or chile on de plantation dat wouldn't die for her dis night if 'twould do de poor sick lamb a bit of good. Why, big and little hangs 'bout de house ev'y time dey comes to eat jes' to ask arter dat sweet, motherless chile, 'till de overseer he done say he's 'fraid mist'es gwine to drive him off 'bout it—but it's gitting late, honey, and I must go. Good-by, Miss Lula, I hope de Lord done see fit to make you well soon," and pressing the tiny, white hand between her hard palms, old Elsy made her adieus, and left the room.

Days melted into weeks, and weeks into months, and God in his infinite mercy had rewarded the faithful friends, and the judicious skill of the physician, by sparing the life of their precious charge.

Now she was about to bid farewell to the home that had

sheltered her through the trials and temptations of her lonely orphanage, and enter another sphere of life as the center and idol of a household where clustered warm and loving hearts. With tremulous joy she rested for the last time upon the little couch which had so often received her weary form, and witnessed the struggles of rebellious childhood, with its prayers and tears of penitence, awaiting the hour for departure.

"All ready, mother! all ready, Birdie!" cried Charlie's cheery voice from the hall, whither he had just gone to carry out the last installment of packages for the carriage—he could not allow the servants to do it, "they were too slow for him," he said, as he hastily entered the room where Mrs. Herbert and her maid were preparing Lula for removal.

"Come, mother! leave Birdie to me, please, while you go and make your regrets to Madame Grant for being forced to leave her fascinating society!" he said, with a mischievous glance at his little friend.

Then lifting Lula's slight form from its pillow, he tied on her little white hood, wrapped a soft shawl around her, took her tenderly in his arms, and was about leaving the house when she whispered something in his ear which arrested his steps.

"Excuse me, if you please, I can't afford to waste any more of my valuable time!" he answered, smiling down into the little pleading face.

"Indeed you must, Charlie! I cannot go without telling Mrs. Grant good-by," she said, firmly.

"And the old curmudgeon will be apt to box your ears for your trouble," he replied, with a grimace—nevertheless he retraced his steps, and in a moment stood with Lula before the lady of the house.

The little orphan said:

"I did not want to go away, Mrs. Grant, without thank-

ing you for taking care of me since mamma died, and telling you how very, very sorry I am for having given you so much trouble. I did try—oh! you don't know how hard—to do right; but I did not understand your ways, and you thought me naughty oftentimes when I didn't know any better. Good-by, Mrs. Grant—please, ma'am, forgive me?" and she stretched out her little white hands nervously toward the cold, immovable figure before her.

This unexpected speech from the truthful child for a moment staggered the firmness of the stern woman. A visible change came over her hard features, a slight moisture dimmed her cold, gray eyes, and her voice quavered as she took the little hand and replied:

"Say no more about it, child; I have nothing against you. Good-by; I wish you well."

"Thank you, Mrs. Grant, I feel stronger and better now from what you say."

Charlie bowed to the hostess, and with his little charge left the house.

"Mother, that is what you call 'heaping coals of fire on your enemy's head'—now didn't Madame Bruin wince under our little Birdie's lash? She rivaled Shakspeare in taming the shrew; I would not have missed the grand *finale* and exit for a splendid mustache and goatee!" he laughingly said, as he placed Lula in the carriage.

"Charlie! Charlie! when will you learn discretion? Profit by Lula's example, and 'Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.'"

As they pursued their homeward course, and Mrs. Herbert listened to the orphan's artless prattle, the following thoughts revolved through the mind of the amiable lady:

"Children are the sovereigns of our hearts, their smiles and tears are more potent than the laws of an emperor; the latter may command the will and the understanding, but the former rule our hearts. The tearful eyes and sob-

bing breath of an injured and oppressed child will arouse painful emotions in the beholder's mind, and indelibly stamp its offender with cruelty and ignominy. The merry laughter of a joyous child is contagious, and falls soothingly on 'the sin-sick heart and world-weary brain,' reminding it of that blissful home whose dwellers have been likened to such little ones on earth. 'Little children are the poetry of the world—the fresh flowers of our hearts and homes.' Their purity and innocence breathes of a heavenly clime, and makes us forget the selfishness, deceit, and treachery of a sinful world. They produce perpetual sunshine, and stir vigorously the feeble life-drops about aged hearts, keeping them fresh and green, carrying their memories back to a sunny childhood, those

Happy days that were as long
As twenty days are now.

Beware of one who can find no room in his heart for the love of an innocent child! Such a one is the possessor of a selfish, cold, and savage nature.

"Heaven bless the precious earth-angels!

Ah! what would the world be to us
If the children were no more?
We should dread the desert behind us
Worse than the dark before."

CHAPTER-IV.

Frame thy mind to mirth and merriment,
Which bars a thousand harms and lengthens life.

BELVOIR, the estate of Mr. Herbert, was several years ago a dense forest almost inaccessible; but the wealth, energy, and refined taste of its proprietor had made it one of the most desirable residences in the Southern States. While contemplating its beauty and magnificence, one is reminded of Dr. Johnson's speech to Garrick, after being shown the fine house and gardens at Hampton Court; instead of replying in the language of flattery, he exclaimed :

"Ah! David, David, these are the things which make a death-bed terrible!"

The mansion at Belvoir is a large, handsome structure of gray stone, with graceful iron verandas, standing upon a natural terrace overlooking the beautiful Chattahoochee and the ever-verdant hills of Alabama. A group of majestic oaks, with their wide-spreading branches, shelter the house from the summer's sun, and give an air of imperial grandeur to the place. In the foreground is a beautiful *parterre*, where flowers of every shade and variety are cultivated in great perfection; just below and around is the charming park with its well-kept shrubbery; and noble clumps of forest trees, through which firmly-rolled graveled walks wind in gentle curves amid the smooth, green lawn, beneath embowering trees. In winding his way along these serpentine paths, the visitor unconsciously meets with an opening affording a lovely prospect of hill and dale, or enters some wild labyrinth, where rustic seats or

a romantic bower invite the weary to repose in their picturesque solitude. A lovely brook gracefully meanders through the grounds, and here and there a sweet waterfall or sparkling fountain will arrest the footsteps, and bring forth exclamations of surprise and delight. Near the house are rare specimens of sculpture gathered abroad; and in the center of the court stands an exquisite statue of a chaste and beautiful nymph, who, like Arethusa, had apparently been enticed by the limpid waters of the fountain to refresh her weary limbs after a chase with Diana. So charming was its grace, so rare its lifelike beauty, that one almost feared it might dissolve into water from the admiring gaze of some Alpheus-like eyes.

Beautiful and unique hedges hide from the eye every unpleasant object, while they complete a landscape that presents a scene of Arcadian beauty.

It was at the close of a mild December day, and the household at Belvoir were engaged in preparations for the approaching Christmas festival; always celebrated by its every member, from the master and mistress, who looked with reverent joy upon the day which brought "Peace on earth, good will toward men"—to the humblest servitor, who reveled in unbounded hilarity and good cheer.

And now the shifting scene once more brings the little Lula before us—Lula, now an orphan only in name—the treasure and sunshine of her home-circle, the idol of the household; wearing no longer the quiet sadness in look and tone, but whose eyes beamed with hope, and whose cheek again wore the rosy tint of health, is wondrously happy in the thought of the coming holiday.

She was skipping merrily to and fro with self-important air; first in the back parlor, where piles of mysterious packages cumbered tables and chairs, peering about with childish curiosity, then whispering in Mrs. Herbert's ear, as if she feared the walls might reveal some pleasant sur-

prise intended for to-morrow; and receiving a smile from the amiable lady, who humored the innocent mystery, the happy child would bound away presently to appear in the kitchen, where Joe and Betty, supreme dictators in its sphere, were deeply immersed in the culinary art

"Uncle Joe, are my little cakes and pies almost ready?" she asked, trying to peep into the stove, as she saw him open the door to watch the baking process.

"Why, bless your heart, honey! they's not had time to 'rive at the beautiful spongy state I wishes 'em to, yet, much less done; but don't consarn yourself 'bout 'em, Miss Birdie—they'll be as light as a feather when you does get 'em. And in that t'other side of de stove," he continued, "there is a pair of as putty little ducks as you ever saw, with beautiful eyes made of spice, and wings all covered with icing; I got Betty to make 'em out of puffy paste, an' they'll fairly melt in your mouth when you goes to eat 'em."

"There *now!* thought you 'tended 'em for Christmas gift?—done made me promise fifty times not to tell, too! dat's de way—ketch a nigger keeping a secret; he cant't do it, 'cept he keep it a-going!" said Betty, laughing immoderately.

"Never mind, Uncle Joe—I have not *seen* them yet," exclaimed Lula, as she observed his confusion, "and I will be just as glad to get them when the time comes, as if I had never heard of them before."

"Sure 'nough, chile, you haven't seen 'em, so I'll keep 'em hid 'till I presents 'em to you," he remarked, much relieved, then added:

"But I'm sorry I blabbed 'bout it."

"He! he! he!" laughed Betty, in an undertone. "Nigger 'bleeged to be a fool *anyhow*;" but she presently said: "Miss Birdie, how'd you like to have a little jelly rabbit, shaking stiff and cold, in one of your little saucers, Christ-

mas morning?" as she filled the various moulds with the clear amber-colored liquid.

"Hurrah for you!" shouted Joe, in triumph, at her inadvertency, "'done 'trayed *yourself* now! It takes a *woman* to keep a secret, certain; you don't ketch dem blabbing 'bout what dey 'spects to do Christmas morning, 'cause 'deys so fond of 'greeable 'sprises!" and his loud ha-ha's rang through every part of his domain.

"Joe is having a merry time," said his mistress, as faint echoes of their mirth reached her in the parlors. "I think he must have succeeded finely with his baking, by that cheerful laugh."

"Or Lula has provoked him into it by some of her artless prattle. I saw her bright face in the kitchen as I passed. She is the sunshine of the place; and the negroes all seem to love her as much or more than they do Charlie," was Mr. Herbert's reply.

"Uncle Joe, why don't you love to make new-fashioned cakes and custards like Aunt Betty does?" Lula asked, as she watched with unflagging interest the multifarious compounds manufactured by their zealous skill.

"'Cause, Miss Birdie, they's in ginerall made by 'ceipts that aint got 'gredients 'nough in 'um to be fit for nothin' when they's made," was the sable *artiste's* reply, in a slight accent of involuntary contempt at the mere thought of parsimony in such matters. "Now *I* can't cook 'thout I've got plenty of things to cook with. Give me full weight of the eggs in flour, sugar, and butter, and I'll make a pound-cake good 'nough for a king. But when I makes by dem stingy Yankee fabrications, with a little bit of flour, a little bit of sugar, and a heap of soda, with two or three eggs, taint fit for nobody 'cept for dem dat wrote 'em. I wish de 'oman dat made dat book was in de place they calls Halifax, where she 'longs, 'fore she put any more 'conomy in folks' heads. Didn't I hear you read in dat

book t'other day 'bout making ox-tail soup, stuffed calf ears, stewed sheep-trotters, and ever so many things of dat sort? It makes me sick to think of um now. I 'spect there's no niggers and dogs whare she lives, couldn't spare 'nough to keep um 'live; all done dead long ago."

"Uncle Joe, ox-tail makes very nice soup; I have seen it often at Mrs. Grant's," artlessly remarked Lula.

"That was 'cause you had nothing better. I've heard talk of *her* 'fore now, chile, and she's one of um, certain. I 'spect she made 'lasses pies and pop-corn tarts, too. Why, bless your heart, honey, there aint a nigger nor a dog on this plantation that would eat a calf's ear or a sheep foot. 'Twas jes' t'other day I flung one of dem same trotters to Tasso, but he 'tended like he warn't hungry, and turned up his nose and walked off, like he was insulted. Presently a plantation dog come 'long, I 'vited him to lunch, he smelt it, then turned his head away. After while he takes it up, and run a little ways off and buried it in the ground, where he let it stay,—dat's all de use *he* got for Yankee sweetmeats."

"Oh! what dear little cakes!" Lula exclaimed, as Joe took them from the tin shapes. "Not a single scorched one among them; I declare, they are too pretty to eat. I am so much obliged to you; now may I take them to the house?"

"Certainly you may, Miss Birdie; but if you want to see something nice, come back after while and see me turn out dat big one; it's most ready now."

"I'll be sure to come," she replied, taking up the dish of cakes, and away she ran into the house.

"I'm 'fraid that chile's too good to live," said Aunt Betty; "she's a real angel, anyhow; I 'spects some day she'll take wings and fly clean away."

"De Lord knows she's good 'nough," exclaimed Joe; "but it'll be a sorry day for this place if she does, for there

aint a soul here but what loves the sweet creature better than they do themselves."

Very soon Lula returned to the kitchen, and said :

"Uncle Joe, auntie thinks the cakes are very nice, and Charlie would eat ever so many, but he said he only wanted to show us that they were as good as they looked, that was all."

"'Bound for Mass' Charlie, you don't ketch him waiting for Christmas, nor nothin' else, when he sees good things 'bout, and I does hope he won't be running over here 'jes now," he said, glancing toward the house with mock anxiety, "cause I'm gwine to turn out dat big cake," and he commenced the delicate operation with a self-confident air, while Lula and Betty looked on in anxious expectancy.

"Well! how do you like it?" he exclaimed, stepping back with arms a-kimbo and an air of intense satisfaction, as he gazed admiringly on his work.

"Now that's what I call a beauty; that's a cake as is a cake."

"I declare, Joe, you ought to take the premium at the world's fair for that cake—it can't be beat!" said Betty.

"It is elegant! such a beautiful light-brown, and just the same color all over; it looks like it was painted instead of baked," added Lula. "I hope auntie will not have it covered over with icing, it is prettier just so."

"I can't trust this big beauty to your little arms, Miss Birdie; Betty must take it in," and as he gave it to her, he remarked:

"Look here, nigger! if you let dis thing fall don't you come back here any more; if you do, I'll kill you for true."

"Where you bury all them folks you kill?" asked Betty, laughing as she walked off to the house. "But you needn't think I'm gwine to hurt it; I thinks much of de Christmas dinner as you do."

"Oh, Uncle Joe, we are going to have such a splendid

time!" exclaimed Lula, at the mention of the coming festivity; "it will be a Christmas just like it used to be when my own papa and mamma were alive; auntie has given me ever so much money of my own, and I have bought, and made, presents for *everybody*! I love to make presents!—from Uncle Walter and auntie, down to little Tom and Lucy at the quarter; and auntie is making such a beautiful Christmas-tree for us children, and she will have a grand dinner party for the grown people; now what are all the servants going to do? Mrs. Grant did not give her negroes any presents, or let them have any parties, she said it was as much as she could do to clothe and feed them the year round, without such waste and foolishness going on for two weeks at Christmas."

"Humph!" said Joe with intense contempt at the mention of such scruples; "I 'spects so sho' 'nuff, Miss Birdie; there ought not to be no Christmas for such stingy folks as dat. But it'll do your heart good to see how we all does such things here. Master and mist'es says they wants to see us 'joy ourselves—de work is all done up beforehand, and we jes' frolicks from mornin' till night, now; Christmas-eve we's gwine to have a big dance, and every other night, at the quarter, there will be a quilting or a candy pullin' one, and then we'll

Dance all night,
Till the broad day-light,
And go home with the gals in de mornin'.

La, Miss Birdie, you never dreamp' 'bout sich times!"

Later in the afternoon of the same day, Charlie asked: "Lula, will you drive with father and mother to Mr. Carlton's, or remain at home and help me arrange the Christmas-tree?"

"I had rather stay with you, but if they wish me, I will go with them," she replied.

"We wish you to please yourself, my dear child, so stay

with Charlie; I know he will make no progress without you. What do you say to our inviting your friend, Dr. Clinton, out to see the tree to-morrow evening?" asked Mr. Herbert.

"Oh, I would be so glad to see him; let me kiss you, Uncle Walter, for thinking of it!" and she put her arms around his neck and gave him a hearty kiss; then suddenly her face assumed a sober expression, and she said: "I am afraid he will feel badly if there is nothing on the tree for him, and now it is too late to make anything. I am so sorry!"

"Why, give him what you gave me just now, little one! It will please him better than anything else."

"Oh, I know what I can do! I'm so glad I thought of it; do let him come, uncle," she cried, clapping her hands and dancing about.

"And we will invite Mr. and Mrs. Sunderland, Annie, and the children to come also," said Mrs. Herbert.

"And Alfred Raymond, too, please, auntie—he always looks so sad; but I hope he will smile and be cheerful when he sees our beautiful Christmas-tree."

"Of course Alfred will be included in the children's invitation, as he is one of the family," replied Mrs. Herbert.

"But Charlie don't call himself a child, and Alfred is about the same age," said Lula, with a mischievous glance at the young gentleman.

"Who dares call me a child, I should like to know? I am Mr. Herbert—junior—at your service, ladies!" returned Charlie, drawing himself up and bowing with mock dignity; "and first of all, madam (to his mother), I will escort you to the carriage, as it is waiting at the door." Mrs. Herbert departed on her errand, while Charlie and Lula were left to their pleasant task.

Although Mrs. Grant had complained so bitterly of her excessive charity to the widow and orphan, Mrs. Graham

had left more than a sufficient sum to defray her own indebtedness, besides some valuable jewels which she had refused to sacrifice while she had other resources at her command. The jewels were mementoes of dear relatives and friends—links that bound her to a happy past of the loved and lost; these Mrs. Grant relinquished after Mr. Herbert had satisfied the exorbitant demand against Lula for clothing and sustenance.

The orphan knew that among them was an elegant watch and chain which had belonged to her father, and this was the gift which she had intended, with Mrs. Herbert's permission, to present to Dr. Clinton as a token of gratitude and esteem for his disinterested kindness toward her. She was aware of his having refused to receive any compensation for services rendered during her illness, and she felt deeply her obligation to his kindness, and firmly believed that her mother's spirit would sanction the bestowal of this gift.

Before retiring that night she took occasion to confer privately with Mrs. Herbert on the subject, who was as much pleased as surprised by this unexpected request, and quickly consented to grant the required permission. She had herself wished to show her appreciation of Dr. Clinton's kindness to the little orphan by some similar token, but feared to offend his sensitive nature by requesting his acceptance of it. As this was, however, the free-will offering of an affectionate child, she concluded that he could not refuse the gift.

"But, my darling," she said to Lula, "I think you do not know the value of this watch; it is an imported one, and has scarcely an equal in the State."

"So much the better, auntie! If it was a common one I would be ashamed to offer it."

"Very well, then, I see your little heart is interested in this matter, so act according to its generous dictates, and

place the watch upon the tree to-morrow evening. Now good night! and pleasant dreams; you must be up with the lark to-morrow, in order to complete your preparations for the evening."

Calm and cloudless was the night of Christmas-eve, while myriads of golden stars sparkled from their glittering home on high, and shed their radiance—the beautiful Southern starlight—over the happy home at Belvoir. Cheerful lights gleamed from the windows, like friendly beacons, to the invited guests, as they traversed the winding way, and promised a glad welcome to the joyous *réunion*.

Charlie and Lula, with bright and happy faces, awaited the arrival of their young friends on the veranda, and amid the gay words of greeting, the delightful, birdlike chorus of juvenile voices, there fell from some mysterious source a perfect hailstorm of noisy torpedoes, producing peals of merry laughter, and causing the children to scamper away with reckless haste.

But Charlie soon rallied his scattered forces in the parlors, where, amid the hush of intense expectancy, at a signal from Mrs. Herbert, the sliding-doors were thrown open, and revealed a scene of fairy splendor.

In the center of the room, between the mirrors, stood the beautiful Christmas-tree, reaching from floor to ceiling, glittering with starlike tapers, and festooned with white wreaths of popped corn, which hung like snowdrops from the branches that were drooping with their gay and precious load. The large mirrors reflected the brilliant scene—each glittering point shone again, till the impression produced was that of being translated into some enchanted grove.

The illusion was so complete that the children cried out in bewildered joy, pointing to the mirrors:

"There is another tree! and another still!"

Charlie was the good genius who distributed the fruit of the mystic boughs, accompanying each gift with some facetious remark, until he plucked from it a tortoise-shell case, with a card attached bearing his own name. On opening it a handsome Geneva watch met his astonished gaze, and for a few moments silenced his volubility.

"Chickie, my cranie crow! what's o'clock, old witch?" cried little Johnny Carlton, impatient at the delay his examination of the time-piece occasioned.

"Well! the watch is not dumb, if *I* am, and it says ten o'clock," he replied, adjusting his long-coveted prize; and then added in a declamatory manner:

"My dear father and mother, I cannot find words to express to you my gratitude for this unexpected token of your kindness and affection; but as you have heretofore seen my anxiety on this point, you can now imagine how acceptable it is;" and bestowing a kiss on each beloved parent, he returned to the tree, exclaiming: "My friends, Richard is himself again!"

"To Aunt Mary—from Lula."

And he handed his mother a package, neatly folded, which proved to be a miniature likeness of Lula and himself in a pretty oval gilt frame.

"Oh, it is beautiful!" exclaimed Mrs. Herbert, as she fondly pressed the pictured semblance of the loved ones to her lips.

"Mother, you meant to say that mine was beautiful, did you not? for Birdie was doubtful about *her* good looks, and begged my handsome phiz to set off the picture," cried Charlie, looking quizzically at Lula.

"No, you saucy fellow, I do not consider you an Adonis by any means. Of course, I meant Lula; how did you manage to have this picture taken without my knowledge, my darling?" asked Mrs. Herbert, as she folded the happy child to her bosom.

"I heard you say, dear auntie, that you wanted my likeness, and I thought you'd prize it more if Charlie's was with it. So I took some of the money you gave me for toys, and had the picture taken; and Charlie brought it out yesterday."

"A thousand thanks, my darling. It is, indeed, an agreeable surprise—and to me, a gift invaluable."

An exquisite meerschaum pipe, margined with gold, from Lula to Mr. Herbert, caused considerable amusement.

"My child, if you thus encourage my ruling propensity," he laughingly said, "I shall soon rival Sir Walter Raleigh in my passion for the narcotic weed."

"Our little fairy seems to have divined the wishes of every one. I would not be surprised to find a splendid set of whiskers and mustache for myself; as she heard me wishing the other day that my prospects in that line could be 'hurried up,' and, like Jack's bean-stalk, become full fledged in a single night," Charlie gravely remarked. "But ah! here is the next thing to it," he exclaimed, displaying a handsome dressing-case, which contained everything appurtenant to a gentleman's toilet.

"A work-box for Lula, filled with thread, needles, and all necessary articles for keeping her own, Master Charlie's, and every one else's wardrobe in perfect order," continued the merry boy, as he handed the box to its owner.

An exquisite miniature silver tea-service, from Mr. Herbert to the orphan, was another evidence of his love for her.

A set of coral ornaments from Charlie, and a handsome annual, finely illustrated, from Dr. Clinton, showed that she occupied a prominent place in their affections also.

Each guest received a due share of the "fairy fruit," as Charlie called the gifts, and were made to rejoice over some unexpected token of love and friendship on the eve of the great festival week.

Even Alfred Raymond was surprised into cheerfulness, as he witnessed so many manifestations of kindness and good will.

Dr. Clinton received Lula's gift with surprise and pleasure; and when Mrs. Herbert told him how much the little orphan was interested in its acceptance, he could not offend her noble, ingenuous heart, by refusing this sacred pledge of affection and gratitude.

Time sped swiftly on its wings of pleasure; the last article was plucked from the tree, and the waning tapers began to drop like tiny meteors from its branches. The last merry game was played, and the youthful revelers showed need of

Tired nature's sweet restorer, balmy sleep;

and with cheerful "good nights," and many kind words and good wishes for future happiness and prosperity, the gay party dispersed.

By the first gray light of dawn, dusky forms were seen stealthily gliding through the house at Belvoir, depositing in some conspicuous place humble tokens of affection for the beloved master and mistress, as well as for the children of the family. If by an awkward step they stumbled against some unseen object, and aroused the sleepers (as they invariably did), a broad grin would illumine their sable faces, as they cried out cheerily: "Christmas gift!" and a "merry Christmas to all!"

Joe and Betty, true to their expressed intentions, had placed the ducks and rabbit on the little *étagère* in Lula's room; they were set in little baskets filled with sugar-plums, which were gifts from the other servants, and to the eyes of the happy child seemed models of taste and beauty, as she discovered them in the first light of the clear winter morning.

When the family assembled in the breakfast-room,

Robert, the polite waiter, bowed to Mrs. Herbert, and said :

"Mistress, I hope you'll excuse the liberty I've taken with the tea-tray this morning, as I and my fellow-servants hope you will all do us the honor of drinking your coffee from the cups and saucers which we beg you will accept from us as 'Christmas gifts.'"

"Indeed we will, Robert, and thank you for this beautiful proof of your esteem. We will drink to your health and happiness, and hope that you may always consider us your best friends and faithful guardians. We are proud of your handsome presents."

When breakfast was over, the party adjourned to the veranda, where a large number of the negroes from the plantation had assembled to pay their respects to the family, and to bring their Christmas offerings of fresh eggs, dried fruits, nuts, and neat baskets which were manufactured by their skillful fingers.

These were modestly laid at the feet of their mistress, and her kind words and pleasant thanks brightened the smiles and gladdened the hearts of the donors.

Then Mrs. Herbert had several large baskets brought out and placed beside her ; these contained the gifts which had been prepared by the family for their dependents. No one was forgotten,—from Uncle Jerry, the gray-headed patriarch of the plantation, who had known several generations of Herberts, to the numberless little toddling children who crowded around the veranda in joyous wonder and expectation.

Charlie and Lula were the almoners of the day ; and while she distributed the gay-colored dresses and bright plaid shawls to the women, Charlie would give money to the men from his roll of bank-bills. Many a fervent "God bless you !" arose from the humble, though happy group,

as they received this substantial token of good will and satisfactory proof of faithful service.

Gentle reader ! this scene is no fancy sketch ; but one which really did occur annually in our happy Southern homes. And many a philanthropist from the hot-bed of fanaticism, who had been taught that the negroes at the South were scarcely above brutes in the estimation of their owners, have witnessed these touching instances of mutual affection with incredulous wonder and astonishment ; and at last—and we fear frequently with unwillingness—have acknowledged their compassion and sympathy misapplied.

While penning these lines, a scene of similar nature, out of many of the kind which she has witnessed, comes before the mind's eye of the writer, stamped, as it is, indelibly upon her recollection by its peculiar circumstances and bearing upon a much-discussed topic.

An eminent divine from the State of Connecticut, distinguished alike for fervent piety and brilliant talent, whose ministrations and eloquence have won the love and commanded the admiration of thousands, was sojourning for several months in the home of a Southern planter.

The Christmas festivities began, and Dr. L. now witnessed, for the first time, the celebration of the holiday as peculiar to this section ; saw the happy bands of dependents watched over and cared for by their kind owners, reveling in hilarity and generous plenty. And when, as the crowning feature of the occasion, the gifts and tokens of mutual good will and regard were offered,—“ Oh, my friend ! ” he exclaimed to his host, while tears of feeling filled his eyes, “ how have these things been represented—or misrepresented to me ! where I thought to find only misery and degradation, I see content and happiness ; instead of strife and bitter feeling, mutual kindness and regard. Truly, we live and learn ! ”

But where, oh! where are those humble friends now? Unbidden tears spring to the eyes in answer to this query. Dissension and discord were sown between the two races, and the faithful and once happy domestics became suspicious of their former friends, and are now idle and miserable wanderers, without home or country. Many of them have perished from want and exposure, and the few who have returned to beg shelter and protection of their former owners, are glad to eat of the "crumbs that fall from their master's table."

CHAPTER V.

Humor and fun ; humor and fun !
There's nothing like it under the sun !
But if you'd have it a perfect thing,
All of it honey, and none of it sting—
Except perhaps an occasional fling
At pride or folly or some such thing,
Hold on the reins, or rather chains
That wisdom throws o'er fancy's strains.

"WHERE do you intend having Lula educated?" asked Mrs. Carlton of Mrs. Herbert, one day, in a social visit to the latter.

"At home, of course," was the prompt reply; "or as near home as possible—for I heartily disapprove of the practice so prevalent at this time, of sending girls from the paternal roof, or placing them in the care of strangers and hirelings; at the very time, too, when a mother's counsels and influence are most needed."

"But you acknowledge the superiority of Northern institutions over our own, do you not? and that the facilities for acquiring accomplishments are much greater there than with us?"

"No, I do not admit their superiority. Young ladies are often sent from those fashionable institutions with a few showy accomplishments, which are well calculated to fascinate a casual observer and to shine in a mere ball-room existence; but their hearts and understandings are seldom cultivated—but more frequently than otherwise, are suffered to run riot amid the light literature of the day, and to imbibe the prejudices of those around them. Home

is never made brighter by their presence, for their happiness is usually derived from excitement, and in the display of those accomplishments which have been achieved at the expense of every domestic grace and virtue. I insist that girls who are educated at home, under the guidance and watchful care of cultivated and Christian parents, are more thoroughly instructed and are better calculated to fulfill all their duties in life—that, too, in a manner that will reflect credit on themselves and happiness on all around them.”

“They certainly do make better housekeepers,” was Mrs. Carlton’s reply; “but do you think they appear as well in society as those who are sent to a ‘finishing’ school?”

“I do, indeed; and I have had ample opportunity for observation in this country and in Europe; and in no instance have I seen the home-educated Southern ladies surpassed in elegance, grace, or accomplishments. My impressions in this matter are confirmed by the statements of various distinguished travelers. Mr. Herbert can tell you, too, how his heart swelled with conscious pride, at a tribute of praise and admiration bestowed on our countrywomen by an English nobleman at some dinner in London. The party were discussing the comparative differences between the English and Americans, when this gentleman remarked that he thought a great similarity of character existed between Southerners and his countrymen.

“In touching upon the various traits by which he had been most forcibly impressed, he said:

“‘Their women will attract you by their winning though unassuming grace; fascinate you with their sprightly, intelligent conversation; and excite your admiration and respect for their practical sense and useful knowledge. You find them elegant, refined, and accomplished, with every virtue calculated to adorn the home circle, and dignity to grace the highest rank in society,’—and concluded this eulogy by saying: ‘Indeed there is a singular fascination

about those Southern ladies, which is rarely met elsewhere.'"

"Those arguments are quite forcible, certainly, in favor of your views," replied Mrs. Carlton, "and doubtless you are right; but I fear I cannot give practical proof of being convinced by them; for Alice has won the consent of her father to place her at Madame Laurie's establishment in New York, and she would not now yield her point for the opinion of every nobleman and crowned head in Europe."

Mrs. Herbert paused a moment, and then answered in a grave tone:

"Children are not capable of judging between right and wrong. It should be our first care and duty to teach them that our will must be their law, and that obedience to this law will be rigidly enforced if necessary."

"I acknowledge the truth of your remark, but, unfortunately for me, I have never had sufficient resolution to carry it into effect. Alice has an indomitable will, which it would require very severe discipline to conquer; and I often find it better to yield at once to her plans, although my judgment would convince me she was in error. I think, however, that if Mr. Carlton would co-operate with me in the management of the children I might succeed; but he always says: 'Let them alone—let them have their way, for they will necessarily meet with disappointment enough in life, and I wish their childhood's home to be the brightest spot to which they can look back in future years.'"

"I think, by exercising a proper authority over them when young, they are better prepared to struggle with the realities of life," was Mrs. Herbert's reply.

"The same remark was made to me, years ago, by a very dear friend, the mother of Annie Sunderland. Little did she think then that its truth would be so soon verified by the conduct of her own children. I have often admired the order and system of her household—she required im-

plicit obedience, yet the love and reverence manifested by those children for their parents was, and is still, truly beautiful."

"From the peculiar character of the children I imagine their mother was a very superior person. Annie is very lovely, and displays some remarkable traits of character; and I am told that her brother has acted with a nobleness of mind that would reflect honor on those of more advanced years."

"Yes, he has excited the surprise and admiration of every one by his honorable course. Mr. Carlton says it would gratify him more to know that his son would act in a similar manner, if similarly situated, than to have him fill the highest and most exalted station in life. You are perfectly right in your estimate of their mother's character—she was indeed a noble woman!

—All that the world calls great she once possessed,—
With wealth, with rank, her prosp'rous youth was blessed;
In adverse fortune was serene and gay,—
'Who gave,' she said, 'had right to take away.'

The children whom she had so wisely nurtured were a comfort and solace in her declining years, and she felt scarcely a regret at the thought of death, as in her last moments Mr. Sunderland, her brother-in-law, promised to take her children under his protection. Annie is a worthy representative of her mother—a noble type of character, which we do not often meet.

"But, Mrs. Herbert, the object of my visit was to insist on your allowing Lula to accompany Alice to New York to school; I have failed in gaining Mrs. Sunderland's consent for Annie to go, but hope to have better success with you."

"I regret extremely that I am unable to oblige you, Mrs. Carlton; but I cannot think for a moment of sending

Lula away from me, as, among other potent reasons, I have always considered it best to educate children not only in their own country, but immediately among their own institutions, and where you have reason to think their future home will be made. For this reason we did not allow Charlie to remain in Europe, although he might have enjoyed some advantages there that he will not here, especially in Prussia, where it is well understood the system of education is more complete than in any other nation of Europe. We have determined to patronize our own institutions; and I feel assured you will not find an establishment North superior to Dr. Hall's. For talents and scholarship he stands almost unrivaled; the prominent position he occupied in the theological seminary at Columbia proves this fact. In placing Lula under his charge I shall feel confident that I have secured for her the protection and instructions of a gentleman,—a desideratum which is often neglected."

"But Dr. Hall's is a mixed school, is it not?" returned Mrs. Carlton; "and I fancied that the idea of mingling young ladies and gentlemen promiscuously in a common school had grown obsolete, except in the backwoods villages."

"You mistake; Dr. Hall's is really not a mixed school; but a number of gentlemen, who have great reliance on his ability for imparting instruction, have prevailed upon him to admit their sons into his library, and by devoting a portion of his time to them he will prepare them for college."

"Then I am fully persuaded that yours is the wiser plan, and would gladly adopt it myself if I could induce Alice to give her consent," said that dutiful young lady's mother, with a sigh.

It was a pleasant picture—that large, airy school-room, with its bright and cheerful faces; some bent studiously

over books and slates, while others, with sly, roguish eyes, were more intent on watching the master, and only awaited an opportunity to play off some mischievous jest upon their unsuspecting companions.

Love and affection were the rules of government, and the venerable instructor, whose lofty brow and noble features were stamped with intellect and benevolence, would often glance with paternal pride and affection over his interesting and lovely charge.

Dr. Hall belonged to that class of men upon whose face nature had legibly stamped—gentleman. He had a commanding person, a polished air, and manly dignity, that inspired respect without creating awe. His devout and reverential character peculiarly fitted him for leading in public worship, and won the admiration and confidence of all who knew him. Indeed, he was a man in whom the *suaviter in modo* and the *fortiter in re* were admirably blended; and his pupils carried with them a grateful remembrance of his kindness and love wherever fortune cast their lot in life.

At this moment, as we introduce him to the reader, his eye is suddenly arrested by a curious pantomime enacted by the girls who occupied the seats immediately in the rear of those reserved for the classes during recitation—which were now filled with a number of young ladies who were just concluding a lengthy Latin exercise.

The pantomimists understood perfectly the order and regularity which characterized, even to minutiae, their teacher's system; and witnessing so constantly its strict fulfillment, seldom anticipated the slightest deviation therefrom. In the present instance, their expected amusement hinged upon the custom of the doctor—generally an unvarying one—of leaving the room as soon as each recitation was concluded.

Apparently unconscious of their by-play, the teacher

continued the ordinary routine of duty, with an amused expression on his kind face; and when the exercise was concluded, contrary to all precedent, he ordered the class before him to give place to another.

"Lis sub judice—respice finem!" he said, as he quietly remained seated in his chair.

But, behold! as the class attempted simultaneously to rise, they found it impossible to do so, and were forced back upon their seats!

The mischievous girls in their rear had securely fastened the flowing skirts to the carpet; and the efforts made to extricate themselves were so perfectly ludicrous, that they provoked a smile from the "grave and reverend seignior" himself.

But instantly relapsing into stern gravity, he demanded the names of the culprits, who thus dared to infringe and set at defiance the authority of a school hitherto distinguished for the most exemplary order and decorum.

The fun-loving delinquents turned pale with trepidation as they watched the doctor's implacable mein, and sat mute and motionless, unwilling to brave his anger or to implicate their companions.

"Young ladies, this is a grave offense, and one which I cannot suffer to pass unnoticed! Release your prisoners; then come forward and receive your punishment," he said in stern tones, as he bent over to reach his ferule (a much dreaded but heretofore unused instrument of torture) from his desk.

A painful silence still reigned throughout the apartment, no one appearing in answer to this terrible summons.

"Young ladies, shall I punish all of you, in order to find the real transgressors? or will some of your number turn 'state's evidence,' and thus save yourselves?" he gravely asked.

"Dr. Hall," said a sweet, tremulous voice, "I am the

perpetrator of this innocent freak—all are not guilty; and I am ready to abide the punishment, although no disrespect or mischief was intended, if you think proper to administer it." And Annie Sunderland, a fair, graceful girl, came forward and stood with calm dignity before the teacher.

Then, by her side, immediately appeared our young friend Lula Graham (several inches taller than when we last met her), with the meek pleading look of a lamb about to be sacrificed.

The folding-doors that opened into the library where Dr. Hall's students were assembled had been left ajar; and as the two girls approached, several boys, who had been attracted by the unusual tones of the doctor's voice, and had overheard the discussion, stepped simultaneously into the room, and now stood with fierce, defiant glances directed toward their instructor; who, apparently unconscious of their movements, gave his attention to the girls.

"Dr. Hall," said Lula, "I can only repeat what Annie has said. We expected you to leave the room immediately after recitation, and only thought to have a little amusement at the expense of the class during our recess."

"My dear child, I feel tempted to pardon this, your first act of disobedience; and if you will divulge the names of your accomplices, I will grant you full absolution," said the doctor, with much tenderness, as he looked upon the truthful face.

"I had rather not, sir!"

"What do you say, Annie? Will you accept pardon on these terms?"

"No, sir, I cannot!" she replied, firmly.

"Then I must proceed to administer the punishment as I think proper."

At this juncture the boys, who had stood silent spectators of the scene, made another impatient movement,

with riotous looks intent; but still the doctor seemed to ignore their presence, and continued:

"Young ladies, I have witnessed the whole of this proceeding, and must acknowledge my surprise and pain to find some of my best pupils guilty of such misdemeanor. Sarah Ridgely, Isabel Willard, and Julia Stanly, come forward, and let us know why you should not receive lawful punishment?"

All came, and stood like guilty criminals at the tribunal of justice, except Julia Stanly (who, perhaps, understood the character of the good doctor better than most of his scholars); she approached with a bold, fearless air, while a merry smile played around her saucy lips.

The venerable preceptor and eminent divine, whose pulpit eloquence had so often and so successfully appealed to the multitude and enraptured their hearts, concealed beneath a grave and dignified exterior a keen sense of the ludicrous, and a dormant love of innocent humor, which none were so well aware of as the mad-cap Julia.

"How is this, Julia? I see no evidence of penitence in your manner; do you plead 'guilty' or 'not guilty' to the charge preferred against you?"

"I plead guilty, sir! and unless I can prevail on those chivalrous youths to protect me from your anger, I fear we must submit; although the punishment seems greater than I can bear," she replied, with mock solemnity.

For the first time, their instructor deigned to turn his glance toward the boys, who stood grouped together in threatening attitudes, as if meditating an attack, and said:

"Young gentlemen, which of you will come forward as champions in defense of these hapless ladies? Their punishment may be inflicted by proxy, provided they can find willing substitutes."

"I appear as a substitute for Annie and Lula!" exclaimed Alfred Raymond, stepping quickly from the group;

and waving his right hand toward Annie, and the left to Lula, he presented them to the doctor.

"No, no!" exclaimed the two girls, "we will not allow it;" and seizing his hands, held forward their own instead.

"I am for Annie! and I for Lula!" simultaneously exclaimed Robert Carlton and Willie Sunderland, extending their hands, drowning with their loud voices the tones of several others who proclaimed themselves knights ready to defend the two helpless fair ones just mentioned.

"One at a time, young gentlemen, if you please. Your hand, Master Raymond," said Dr. Hall; and he gave one blow as punishment for each girl; then went through the same ceremony with Masters Carlton, Sunderland, and others, each stroke bringing tears from the eyes of the two girls.

"Has the heat of the contest exhausted the chivalry of Young America, that *we* should remain defenseless?" exclaimed Julia Stanly, defiantly, inclining her head toward Alfred Raymond.

"I owe him a grudge," she whispered to Sarah Ridgely, "for saying that Lula Graham's composition was better than mine, last week."

"Oh no! I have strength left to protect the weak," he replied, significantly; then bowing to her, he offered his hand to the preceptor.

"No, Master Raymond! you have already volunteered in defense of two ladies, and I cannot permit you to suffer for the third."

After considerable parley among them, other boys were persuaded to come forward and rescue the forlorn damsels; perhaps shamed to the duty by the spontaneous gallantry of Raymond, Carlton, and others. Some were heard to remark that all except Annie and Lula deserved punishment for refusing to acknowledge their guilt, and then in heartlessly wishing the boys to suffer for them.

The doctor might have been of the same opinion, and his high-toned, chivalrous spirit was certainly shocked at their tardiness in coming forward ; for the blows fell thick and fast upon the hands of the ruthless knights.

This novel mode of correction had a salutary effect upon the pupils—the rules of decorum were henceforth strictly observed by our friends, Annie and Lula, and corporeal punishment was never again resorted to in the school where honor, esteem, and affection held such potent sway.

A few days after the incident recorded above, Lula Graham lingered in the recitation-room after the dismissal of the school, and said, with some hesitation :

“Dr. Hall, if you have no immediate engagement on hand, I would like to detain you for a few moments, as I wish to ask a favor.”

A smile brightened his benevolent face as he gently stroked her soft ringlets.

“Do not hesitate a moment to do it, my dear child ; for without knowing the nature of your request, I feel assured that it is a reasonable one, and therefore can promise a ready compliance with your wish.”

“Thank you, doctor ! but still I fear you will not approve of this request when it is made known, as it may possibly cause mortification and embarrassment to the person whom I wish to serve.”

“Well, let us decide that after your purpose is revealed ; perhaps I may be able to assist you in some way.”

Thus convinced of his sympathy and willingness to oblige her, she said, blushing :

“I have a little friend, who is very bright and intelligent considering her advantages. She is very anxious to be taught, and I have assisted her in acquiring a knowledge of books which has incited her to make further progress in learning. Her parents are poor, ignorant Irish, and, of

course, cannot send her to school; therefore I concluded to appeal to you in her behalf."

"You have done wisely, my child. Bring her to me by all means. It will be a labor of love for me to assist in her laudable desire. Bring her without fail on to-morrow. I shall welcome your little Irish friend as cheerfully as if she were the daughter of a millionaire, indeed more so, because from the latter I should expect only temporary remuneration, but in the case of the former I shall receive an immortal reward."

"Dr. Hall, I intended you should receive both. It was not my purpose to introduce Maggie Mooney into your school as a charity scholar. That I never should have dared to do. I have reserved a sufficient amount from my pin-money to pay half of her tuition in advance, and at the expiration of the term, when the remainder is due, it will be ready for your acceptance."

"God bless your pure and unselfish heart, dear Lula!" the venerable teacher exclaimed, with tender emotion; then, after a brief pause, added:

"I cannot permit this self-denial on your part. I cannot allow you so much advantage of me in Christian kindness and generosity. Say no more about remuneration, my child, but request your young friend to meet us on to-morrow at this place. You have interested me greatly in her behalf, and I am anxious to cultivate an acquaintance which promises much pleasure."

"You must excuse me, doctor, if I fail to comply with your request on such terms. Maggie is a peculiar girl in some respects, and possesses an innate sense of independence and self-respect. She would never enter the school-room of a stranger without thinking she could give a recompense for the services bestowed. She does not feel the same hesitancy in receiving a favor from me, because I have persuaded her that at some future time she

can assist me with her needle, and in various other ways. Her father is a man of good impulses, and if he could refrain from liquor, would probably be able to support his family very genteelly; but that unfortunate habit has mastered him completely, and often in his hours of intoxication he will say or do something that will disturb the peace and quietude of his family, and cast a reproach on the Catholic Church, of which his wife is a pious and exemplary member. You must let her come, doctor, upon the condition I propose, or she will not come at all; and it will be a great disappointment to me as well as to Maggie."

"Have it your own way for the present, my daughter; but when Maggie and I become acquainted, we will arrange it differently, I suspect," he said, smilingly.

"Thank you! thank you! my kind, good teacher. Now, the only thing that disturbs me, or will mar the pleasure of bringing my friend to school is, that the girls may not receive her kindly on account of her parentage, and her sensitive nature perhaps will be wounded by some careless or unkind remark."

"Ah! my dear child, do not let the fear of ridicule deter you from doing a noble and generous deed that will surely meet with the approbation of your God, and cause joy among the heavenly hosts."

The next morning, at the appointed hour, Lula Graham appeared, accompanied by a modest, quiet-looking young girl, whom she escorted up to the teacher, and said:

"Dr. Hall, this is my friend, Maggie Mooney."

His kind face was instantly illumined with a pleasant smile, which completely won the little stranger's heart, and taking her hand, he remarked:

"I am glad to receive you as a pupil, Maggie, and I am certain we shall be stanch friends in a little while."

After further conversation, her timidity gave place to

natural ease, and she met his paternal glance quite fearlessly. Then he requested her to be seated.

No particular seat had been designated, and the poor girl stood for a moment painfully embarrassed as she saw several of the young ladies spread out their spacious crinoline to the fullest extent, showing thereby that her proximity to them was not desirable.

Dr. Hall witnessed this cruel and unkind manœuvre on the part of his pupils, and quickly remarked:

"Annie, give Maggie a seat between Lula and yourself; as she is my friend, I can safely depend on you to see she is properly cared for until she is sufficiently acquainted to feel at home among us."

As Lula seated herself beside the blushing girl, Julia Stanly gave a contemptuous toss of her head, and said:

"'Birds of a feather flock together;' I want none of Paddy's company myself."

Annie Sunderland and Lula Graham were universal favorites, and exerted a happy influence over the pupils; therefore Dr. Hall felt no uneasiness about the introduction and future welfare of Lula's *protégée*.

Maggie soon made rapid progress in the good graces of a majority of the young ladies by her gentle, modest manner. Her improvement was watched with surprise and delight by her teacher, who would often stimulate the happy girl to renewed efforts by saying, as he gently patted her head:

"Ah, Maggie! when you are a little older, you can relieve me of many duties that are becoming almost too onerous for an old man who has nearly numbered his three-score and ten."

CHAPTER VI.

The sunny hours of childhood,
How soon they pass away!
Like flowers in the wild-wood,
That once bloomed fresh and gay.

TWELVE or fifteen months had elapsed since the scenes described in the last chapter. It was at the close of the scholastic year, and the examination of the first class had passed creditably to all parties. Annie Sunderland was the successful competitress for the first honor, and had won golden opinions from the critics by her thorough knowledge of the text-book. Her gentle, unassuming manners had secured the affection of her companions; and when it was known that she would receive the highest premium for scholarship, the voice of envy and malice were hushed, for none dared to question a decision so justly made.

But in the second class, much doubt had existed as to who would be the fortunate candidate. The contest at length became exciting and amusing between Julia Stanly and Lula Graham. Although it was an established fact among teachers and pupils that Lula was the best scholar in her class, yet the bold, confident manner of Julia so deluded the audience that it soon became evident she would triumph over the timid Lula.

A difficult question was propounded, and correctly answered by Lula, but in softly-modulated tones, scarcely audible to any save her teacher and companions. Julia's quick, attentive ear was on the *qui vive*, and instantly catching the words, boldly remarked to Lula, "You mistake!" and then turning to the audience, in a clear, distinct voice,

she repeated the same answer *verbatim*; which before Lula's reply was unknown to her.

Dr. Hall, and Lula's friends who sat near, saw through this stratagem immediately, and were secretly annoyed at Julia's duplicity in thus endeavoring to defraud the orphan girl of her just laurels; and the poor child was so overcome by the audacity of her rival that the encouraging smile of her teacher, and his affectionate request: "Speak a little louder, my dear child—your answers are perfectly correct," failed to produce any effect whatever on the embarrassed and sensitive girl.

Emboldened by the success of her artful game, Julia continued to play off upon the credulity of the audience, and completely vanquished her competitor.

Dr. Hall appeared perfectly nonplussed at this unexpected termination of affairs, and closed the book with apparent disgust, as he saw the proud, exultant looks which Julia bestowed on her gentle victim. His noble and generous heart was deeply grieved by the shameless manner in which Lula had been deprived of the honor so justly her due; and requested her to meet him in the library after the exercises had closed, that he might relieve her mortification by acknowledging her superiority in scholarship, and express his regret at the unjust decision of the committee.

Accompanied by Mrs. Herbert, she soon entered the room; but, instead of the sad, tearful face he expected to see, she appeared radiant with happiness, and her cheerful voice and merry laugh rang through the apartment as sweetly as the tones of a silver bell.

"My dear child, I am delighted to see this happy transformation in your countenance; you come like a sunbeam to dispel the cloud that had settled over the heart of your old teacher,—I expected to see your face bathed in tears; and knowing that you would value my opinion, I

wished to comfort you by saying that you have acquitted yourself well, far better than any other in the class; and I am compelled to say my disappointment is *very* great, in having this affair terminate so differently from what I anticipated. Madam," he continued, turning toward Mrs. Herbert, "does it not strike you as something very ridiculous, that one, proverbial for idleness and inattention, should apparently excel a class of intelligent girls, and carry off the prize before the eyes of her instructor and companions; and through the decision of impartial critics, who were to see justice done?"

"It was certainly very amusing to those who understood the farce; but I hope you will not allow it to disturb you for a moment, Dr. Hall; I am perfectly satisfied with the result—and shall always feel proud of my little girl, when modesty and a want of boldness are considered her greatest defects;" and Mrs. Herbert wound her arm affectionately around the child.

"Thank you, dear auntie! For the sake of my friends I should like to have succeeded, but I am not at all disappointed, as I felt certain beforehand that my confidence would desert me; and when we came upon the stage, and I found so many eyes turned toward us, I felt dizzy, and thought that I should faint, although I tried, as Charlie had told me, 'to screw my courage to the sticking point.' At first I was scarcely conscious of the sound that issued from my lips; still, if I had been left alone, perhaps I would have recovered myself; but Julia entirely disconcerted me by saying: 'You mistake! it is thus and so;' and the girls all say she repeated precisely what I had just said, for fear of betraying her ignorance at the next question. I cannot imagine her motive for such queer conduct; but I am sure she is not so happy in the possession of her prize as I am now in receiving the approbation of such dear friends;" and her beaming eyes and glowing face gave evidence of the truth of this assertion.

"I do not doubt it, my child;" and Dr. Hall gently stroked the head of his favorite pupil, and remarked to Mrs. Herbert:

"I have never approved of a public examination of young ladies, and am now more thoroughly convinced that it should never be allowed. My objections were overruled, however, by my patrons, who contended that it was best not to run counter to popular opinion in such matters."

"I agree with you cordially," returned Mrs. Herbert, "for it is rarely the case that true merit is rewarded on such occasions."

"I think Julia will find it rather difficult to get the advantage in composition, for Lula has one that cannot be surpassed by a girl of her age. It is beautiful in its simplicity, and bears the unmistakable impress of originality,—a compliment I cannot pay to many," said Dr. Hall, aside to Mrs. Herbert, as she was leaving the room.

* * * * *

"I declare, it is too provoking! to allow that great ignoramus to take the first honor, when Dr. Hall and the whole school knows that Lula Graham is entitled to it; why, Charlie, she cannot parse a sentence correctly to save her life. The other day one of the boys inquired of her, 'Miss Julia, what general commanded at the battle of Waterloo?'—and the reply was, 'General Washington, of course!' She is the butt of the school. The girl has mind enough, too, but she has never applied herself to books; and yet, by constant intercourse with good society, she has picked up considerable information, and will often astonish one with brilliant flashes of wit and wisdom, which are apparently genuine. There is no depth or solidity about her; the little information she possesses is all superficial, and the cloven-foot will show itself when least expected." It was thus Alfred Raymond vented his indignation to Charlie Herbert as they left the seminary.

"She deserves a reward! for it was the richest farce I ever saw acted," was his friend's energetic rejoinder; "and the audience were easily humbugged, as they were too far off to hear poor Birdie trilling out her low notes. I could scarcely control my risibles, when the daring creature, with a haughty toss of her pretty head, said: 'You mistake! it is so and so,'—and then with perfect sang froid she repeated Birdie's answer."

"Yes, and the other girls had no opportunity to expose her ignorance, as she sat next to Lula, who always replied correctly, and thus Julia's answers were ready made for her. But she is no match for her in composition, as you will see to-night, when the reading takes place."

"Alfred, I do not feel the slightest chagrin at Lula's defeat; her soft tones fell more pleasantly on my ear, than if she had combined with her knowledge the bold and self-confident manner of Julia Stanly."

"By-the-by, Charlie!" exclaimed Alfred, as he stopped suddenly in their walk, "I promised Cousin Annie to take her books home, and it had escaped my memory until this moment; I will return for them, and rejoin you immediately."

"Well, Charlie!" said Alfred, excitedly, as he came running back, "I suspect some foul play again; what it is, I cannot say; but there is certainly some evil afloat, as you must see when I tell you what I have seen and heard. As I entered the library, which you know opens into the school-room, 'not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse;' but as I was in the act of taking the books from the table, I heard a light, stealthy step in the next room, which arrested my attention in a moment, and soon I heard a familiar voice say: 'This is not the first time I have frustrated the plans of that mealy-mouthed pauper!' The unmistakable click of the doctor's desk-lock followed this speech, and then I concluded to interfere and spoil some

plot; when, in my haste to get a sight of the conspirator, I dropped the whole armful of books I had just collected, and only reached the door in time to catch a glimpse of that hateful pink dress of Julia Stanly's as she sprang into the opposite room."

"What could she have been doing? And who is the pauper? She certainly did not allude to Lula Graham!" said Charlie, with indignant vehemence.

"She will condescend to do anything, or to say anything, to accomplish her designs. Unfortunately for us, too, Annie and Lula have gone out to dine, and we shall not see them before the exhibition commences this evening, therefore cannot make inquiries of them, or warn them of danger in time."

"Were the compositions placed in Dr. Hall's desk?" asked Charlie, after a few moments' pause.

"I do not know, but I'm afraid they were; for I think the doctor intended to give them into the hands of the committee this noon. I would return and speak to him of my suspicions, but he left the house some time ago; and I fear that Themis and Astræa have forsaken the halls of learning."

"I suppose, *nolens volens*, we must let the matter rest. But I am anxious for the *dénouement*," said Charlie, ironically, "and hope it will pass off with brilliant effect; for as neither Annie nor Lula will be seriously disturbed by her heartless manœuvring, it will be quite interesting to watch the course of events."

The concert was a brilliant affair; the gifted, the beautiful, and the gay thronged the lighted halls. Rich music floated through the air and blended with the rapturous applause, after the reading of each essay, as the fair authoress seated herself, with a sigh of relief, beside her companion, whose heart was throbbing wildly in anticipation of the ordeal through which she too must pass.

Dr. Hall had granted to the junior class the privilege of requesting some gentleman to read their compositions aloud to the audience; Lula and a few others of the more timid gladly availed themselves of this indulgence. According to their request, Charlie Herbert and Alfred Raymond had obtained seats near the stage, to be in readiness for this ceremony.

One by one the folded papers were taken from the table and handed to their owners, and the number was growing "beautifully less," when the teacher took the remaining ones and carefully examined their envelopes. Immediately his face assumed a perplexed expression, and he approached Lula, holding them still in his hand.

"Oh! Dr. Hall," she exclaimed in great trepidation, "Charlie or Alfred will read it for me; give it to either of them." And she sank timidly back on her seat.

"But, my dear child, it appears that you wish to deprive us of your composition altogether; you must return it immediately; we cannot afford to lose it," he said, smiling.

"Return it, Dr. Hall! Indeed, I have not seen it since I handed it to you yesterday!"

"Where can it be, then? I folded them all carefully together, and handed the package to the committee this afternoon; and they were all returned, as I supposed, and placed on the table. I will inquire of the gentlemen—perhaps they can account for its non-appearance."

As the last notes of the musical interlude died away, he gave Julia Stanly her composition and left the stage.

Julia arose and moved to the center of the stage. Proudly beautiful did she appear as she calmly met the admiring gaze of that vast assembly.

With a graceful inclination, and an air of dignity which a tragedy queen might have envied, she commenced her reading.

It was a singular medley—emphatically a “mosaic” of fancy and “flowers of rhetoric,” with some wild flights of imagination strung together in sounding phrase,—the grand *finale* being the introduction of the American eagle, who, perched upon the pinnacle of liberty, was then and there ready, “and waiting,” to pounce upon and utterly annihilate any meddling interlopers who dared to trespass on the rights of freedom.

Casting another triumphant glance over the sea of upturned faces, she retired to her seat amid the plaudits of the crowd.

“I say, Will! don’t that sound like John Stanly’s fourth of July oration, down at Buckhead, last summer?” said Robert Carlton, in a stage whisper, to his friend, Willie Sunderland.

“That it did!” exclaimed Willie, in a tone of ill-disguised contempt. And this resemblance was so striking to many that they in vain endeavored to conceal their laughter, which, fortunately, was presently drowned by the music.

“Your composition is lost, and no one can give any clew to its disappearance, my dear Lula. The gentlemen tell me that it was not among those given them, and the only conclusion I can arrive at is, that it was purloined by some envious or malicious person from my desk. Truly this has been a bitter day to you; but do not despond, for true merit and talent such as yours will sooner or later meet its just reward. *Cernit omnia, Deus vindex*,” said the doctor, as he walked away.

Last, though not the least in the estimation of the audience, came Annie Sunderland.

Beautiful as a poet’s dream, in a gossamer robe of virgin purity, the loose sleeves looped with fragrant white flowers, and exposing arms which were so exquisitely moulded that

the fastidious taste of a Canova could wish for no better models. She wore no ornament except a circlet of pearls, that rested lightly on her neck, which rivaled them in purity, and would have shamed the boasted alabaster whiteness of Lady Hester Stanhope's.

There was modesty, simplicity, and dignity in her mien, united with rare loveliness; and the sweet expression beaming from her soft, hazel eyes reminded one of Raphael's faultless Madonnas. At first the words came soft and low from her trembling lips, sounding like music in the distance; but gradually her confidence revived as her heart became interested in her theme; and then no artful Parisian *rouge* could vie with the bright rosy hue which mantled her cheek.

It was her valedictory, and from the abundance of her heart her mouth spake. In touching and beautiful language she alluded to the happy band now about to be severed, who had traversed the paths of knowledge, exercising loving kindness and good will toward each other, and directed by the counsel and wisdom of one who smoothed the rugged way, and gently led them through the intricate paths.

"How shall I thank you," she continued, "my venerable friend and beloved instructor, for your paternal care; for your lessons of wisdom and truth; for your kind and gentle forbearance toward the willful and erring ones, whom the dictates of your noble heart would have made wise and good!

"You have unlocked for us the vast store-house of knowledge, and taught us that 'wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.' May we hope that your counsel has sunk deep into the hearts of those whom you have so wisely tutored; and when in pursuit of temporal blessings, we may not forget your repeated charge to lay up 'treasures in heaven, where neither

moth nor rust doth corrupt, nor thieves break through and steal.' If prayers from grateful, loving hearts can avail, heaven's richest blessings must ever rest on you and yours!"

The address was such as a refined and noble-minded girl would have written—the outpouring of her pure and guileless heart, embellished with glowing imagery and striking thought.

When she had concluded, many an eye, unused to weeping, was seen to glisten with a tear; but no applause or compliment gratified her so much as the warm pressure of the hand and fervent "Heaven bless and protect you, my dear, good Annie!" from her venerable preceptor.

The young ladies had performed alternately on the piano and harp; but policy on the part of Signor Robaldi, the musical instructor, had reserved Lula for the last. United to her superior skill in instrumental music, she possessed a voice of rare sweetness and power; and it had been a pet wish with the signor up to the last moment, that he could prevail upon her to sing with him one of those splendid duets from the Italian opera, which display so finely that compass and flexibility of voice which she possessed in an eminent degree, united to great melody and pathos. But she firmly refused to comply with this request, and with a look of disappointment upon his face, he placed one of the brilliant sonatas of Mozart before her.

The complimentary manner in which it was received by the audience determined him to make another effort to exhibit her voice.

Several months previous, the signor had arranged and set to music in a masterly style some lines from Moore's poems, intending to dedicate them to Annie, and expected soon to surprise her with a printed copy of the same.

This secret had been imparted to Lula, and she was

quite familiar with the music; so he quickly decided, as a last resort, that this piece she should sing, and said:

"Will you not sing that simple *aria* in compliment to Miss Sunderland, who will soon leave us to return no more?"

The wily Italian had touched the right chord, as he well knew; for Annie, although a year or two Lula's senior, was her dearest and best friend, and her name was the magic spell which would serve to inspire the young performer with confidence.

With a gratified smile he acknowledged Lula's acquiescence—arranged the manuscript on the rack, and, approaching Annie, he bowed with native grace, and said:

"Miss Sunderland, will you listen to our farewell song?"

A light prelude floated through the apartment; then joining the signor's full, rich tenor, Lula commenced in a voice, soft and low, to warble forth notes of exquisite sweetness. Louder, still louder grew the strain, until every heart seemed electrified with the delicious harmony; then melting again into murmurs as gentle and low as the tones of an Eolian harp, it was borne by the night-breeze slowly away.

No heartless plaudits now! but one loud enthusiastic outburst of feeling greeted her ears, and, "Encore!" "Encore!" rang from every quarter of the hall.

Not deeming this compliment personal, or occasioned by any merit of her own, but supposing that her listeners concurred in the sentiments of the song, and rejoicing that the peerless Annie was thus appreciated, she again sang, in faultless strains:

Peace be around thee, wherever thou rovest!

May life be for thee one summer's day;

And all that thou wishest, and all that thou lovest,

Come smiling around thy sunny way!

If sorrow e'er this calm should break,
 May even thy tears pass off so lightly;
 Like spring-showers, they'll only make
 The smiles that follow shine more brightly.

May Time, who sheds his blight o'er all,
 And daily dooms some joy to death,
 O'er thee let years so gently fall,
 They shall not crush one flower beneath!
 As half in shade, and half in sun,
 This world along its path advances,
 May that side the sun's upon
 Be all that e'er shall meet thy glances!

A few days after the concert, Robert Carlton called one morning at Mrs. Stanly's to deliver a note from his mother. As an answer was required, he was requested to remain until one could be written, and Mrs. Stanly said:

"Julia is from home, so in lieu of better company, I will offer you an agreeable book."

Calling a servant, she ordered her to bring a couple of new books from the table in Miss Julia's room—then turning to Robert, she added: "I think you will find some handsome plates in those volumes; they were sent to my daughter yesterday, by a friend;" and, satisfied that she had provided for the amusement of her youthful guest, Mrs. Stanly proceeded to write her note.

In a moment or two the servant returned, and as Robert received the books, he could not resist smiling as he read their titles,—"*Davies' Algebra*" and "*Miss Leslie's Complete Cookery*."

"Well," thought he, "I shall have a charming time of it, and *no mistake!* for I never see a cookery book without its making me as hungry as a wolf—the pangs will become insupportable if I am forced to read one for twenty minutes or a half hour; and for this scientific treatise—the old

Algebra—I shall certainly fall asleep over *that*, as I have done hundreds of times before.”

As he said this, however, he mechanically opened the latter volume, and apparently the effect was somewhat different from the somnolent one he had anticipated; for as his eyes fell carelessly on the open page, they suddenly became riveted on a neatly folded paper, superscribed “Lula Graham’s composition,” in pretty, ladylike characters.

Robert uttered an exclamation of astonishment which caused Mrs. Stanly to glance toward him; but as he appeared to be so much interested in his book, she continued writing without making any remark.

“I will take it upon myself to relieve you of this document, fair lady!” he said, mentally; and suiting the action to the words, he quietly slipped the paper into his pocket.

“Well, Master Robert, I hope you have been amused with the books?” said Mrs. Stanly, as she folded her note.

“I have indeed, madam,” he answered, with a queer smile, “but not, I think, in the way you imagine. The servant failed to bring the books you mentioned—yet I do not regret it—and was quite pleased to see the familiar face of the old Algebra again. Be kind enough to say to Miss Julia, for me, that if she has difficulty in solving any of its mysteries, I think I can furnish a clew; and will be happy to render any assistance.” With a bow of profound respect, the young gentleman left the house.

CHAPTER VII.

Her form was faultless, and her mind,
 Untainted yet by art,
 Was noble, just, humane, and kind:
 And virtue warmed her heart.
 But, ah! the cruel spoiler came.

ON a beautiful eminence which commanded a view of the graceful wavering chain of the Blue Ridge, stood a fine old baronial-like mansion, whose immense size and solid grandeur indicated the princely wealth of its owner. From its noble portico the view was charmingly diversified by hills and valleys, highly cultivated fields, and groups of forest trees, beneath whose mantling shade the white cabins of the negroes rested in tranquil beauty. Cattle grazing upon fertile hills, and a thousand beauties of a pastoral nature as far as the eye could reach, called forth the wonder and admiration of every beholder.

It was evening, about the close of summer, when the first chill winds of autumn had begun to clothe the rich verdure in her somber hues, that the mansion was brilliantly illuminated, and presented a scene of gorgeous magnificence. Along the winding avenue innumerable vehicles were seen approaching—from the great coach of the “F.F.V.” to the airy phaeton of the *parvenu*. All were assembling to celebrate the marriage of Kate Sunderland, the beautiful heiress of Prospect Hill.

William Sunderland, the father of Kate, was the son of one of those noble old cavaliers whose life and fortune were devoted to the cause of liberty.

Oftentimes had Kate, with her little brother and sister,

sat at their father's feet and listened to his thrilling accounts of the noble Washington and his heroic band of suffering, hungry soldiers, who, during their weary march, sought shelter on the plantation. And while the poor, tired, ragged creatures rested in comfort, his mother, with the maidens of the household, manufactured from blankets and every available material clothes to protect them from the chilling blasts of winter.

Father, mother, brother, and sister had all passed away, and Kate, the last of the family, alone remained. From childhood she had been left to the care of Mr. Preston, a kind and indulgent guardian, who, by his judicious management, had increased the estate to an immense value.

When the heiress made her debut in society, she was greeted with great eclat by the good and noble for her intrinsic worth, as well as for her golden charms by those ignoble wretches—fortune-hunters—who infest society under the garb of honorable men. Among the worshipping throng came one of commanding appearance. His manly beauty, his intelligence and rare colloquial powers, were all calculated to win the guileless heart and passionate love of an unsophisticated girl.

In eloquent tones he plead his suit, and, regardless of the warning voice of guardian and friend, she consented to become the bride of George Raymond. To remonstrate with her seemed useless—for love had suddenly transformed the gentle, affectionate girl into an independent, self-willed woman. She would reply, in the language of song:

Oh! what was love made for, if 'tis not the same
Through joy and through torrents, through glory and shame?
I know not, I ask not, if guilt's in that heart,—
I but know that I love thee, whatever thou art.

A short time previous to the introduction of Kate Sunderland into society, George Raymond made his advent as

a teacher in one of the public schools of Virginia. His intelligence and gentlemanly bearing were considered a sufficient passport to the first circles in that land of equal rights, where worth and not money constituted the real aristocracy. In a little while he became a law student of Judge Thompson, and very soon it was announced publicly that Thompson and Raymond had formed a copartnership for the practice of law.

An intricate case presented itself, and Raymond's maiden speech on that occasion was delivered with so much force and power that the acclamations of the assembled multitude rose to the highest pitch. His oratory entranced and aroused the audience, while it carried conviction to every heart. Even the reporters sat idly at their desks, and, with lips apart and eyes riveted on the speaker, listened to the words of burning eloquence which fell from his mouth. The passions and understanding of the jury were so perfectly controlled by this splendid and masterly effort, that without leaving their seats a verdict was rendered in favor of Raymond's client. It was conceded by all, that since the days of Patrick Henry no orator had ever so enraptured and swayed the hearts of an assembly.

Like that great man, there had been no gradual climbing up the ladder of fame, but, bold and self-confident, he had instinctively mounted the giddy height and assumed a position which none had a right to dispute. Congratulations poured in from every quarter. The dignified judge who had presided came up, after the adjournment of court, and said, as he cordially grasped his hand:

"I see, young man, that you have been brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, and partaken of the fruits of knowledge. See to it that it be for good, and not evil; but I fear so much learning will make thee mad."

While this triumph formed the chief topic of conversation, and Raymond was being lionized by the elite of the

city, Kate Sunderland made her debut, and was unanimously proclaimed the belle of the season. Beautiful, amiable, and accomplished, she received the homage paid her as a child whose heart knew no guile would the kindness and attention of companions. Artless and sincere herself, she never doubted the veracity of others; and when suitors on bended knees sued for her heart and hand, and vowed that a refusal would doom them to a life of eternal misery, she would often seek the solitude of her chamber, and weep for the woes she had unconsciously caused.

Alas, poor Kate! Had you been a few years older, experience would have taught you that some men, as well as women,

Can't do otherwise than lie, but do it

So well, the very truth seems falsehood to it.

Kate Sunderland was rather above the medium height, with dark auburn hair, bright hazel eyes, and a clear transparent complexion, which varied with every emotion of her heart. Her features were of the Grecian type, and when in repose indicated a regal hauteur; but when she spoke, the saucy dimples would play at hide and seek upon the soft rounded cheeks, and dispel any such delusion.

It was, indeed, a matter of little surprise that a man who could fascinate and influence the judgment of "potent, grave, and reverend seigniors," should captivate and win the love of a maiden who had scarcely numbered her eighteenth birthday, or that Kate should have returned to her home the affianced bride of George Raymond, although she had no knowledge of his antecedents previous to his arrival in Virginia.

The faithful old guardian, with a trembling hand and tearful eyes, fearing to forfeit her love by a stern refusal, gives the beautiful child of his adoption to the noble-look-

ing stranger, and vainly strives to stifle the thought that a father's or a mother's love would possibly have saved her from the cruel fate which he feared awaited her.

All within the festive hall appeared filled with joy and gladness, save the affectionate old guardian; and the fair bride, with the air of an empress, bows her lovely head, with its rich coronal of orange flowers, and willingly resigns her heart and hand, with all her worldly possessions, in childlike confidence and trusting love to her heart's idol.

The autumn winds howl and moan, and the guardian's anxious heart fancies they sing her requiem as she enters the portals of a living tomb. The banquet-hall was soon deserted, and the old man was alone; still the requiem sounded strangely sad, and fell like molten lead upon his heavy heart.

For awhile Kate appeared the personification of happiness, and Mr. Preston hoped that his fears had been groundless, as he witnessed the mutual love and devotion of the wedded pair. By-and-by his watchful eye discovered that the rose on her cheeks was gradually assuming the lily's hue, and her cheerful ringing laugh was seldom heard to echo through the lofty halls, as George Raymond would absent himself for weeks and months from Prospect Hill.

Occasionally a floating rumor would reach his ear that Raymond, who was strongly addicted to gaming, had returned to his former haunts and habits.

As straws show which way the wind blows, so do trifles mark the course of events. A simple incident, which occurred about twelve months after the marriage, will indicate the state of feeling among the negroes on the plantation.

Old Jesse, a faithful but superannuated servant of the family, occupied comfortable quarters convenient to the

mansion, where his wants were liberally supplied by the young mistress. Scarcely a day passed that she did not personally inquire of his welfare, and bring with her some token of her appreciation of his faithful services and devotion to the family. About his feet were usually congregated the progeny of the second and third generation, who roasted potatoes, and drank buttermilk from a large pewter basin on the broad hearth. It was a snatch-and-grab game; sometimes one and then another getting the advantage, and the victor was furiously assailed with tin cups and spoons, and a general row would ensue, which brought into requisition granddaddy's crutch. A fierce rap upon the heads of some of the nearest would cause the little rogues to scamper in every direction. Just after a disturbance of this nature had been settled, the old daddy seated himself in his high-back chair, and puffed vigorously an old corn-cob pipe, when a succession of yells were heard outside of the door, which brought the old man to his feet, and in bounced a portly dame, with vengeance flashing from her eyes. She gave a kick, as she entered the door, to a harmless little squatter on the sill, and sent him whirling out of the door.

"Look here, nigger, what's to pay out there? what's that fuss about? I'll let you know I'm master here, and nobody rules this house but me," said old Jesse with an air of offended dignity.

"'Nuff to pay, I can tell you, daddy—I'm just in the notion to fight somebody, I don't care who; 'cause dat white man's come home mad as a March hare, and 'cause little Jim didn't open the gate fast enough for him, he took the butt of his whip and fetched him a whack 'cross de face, and dun most put out Jim's eye. And there's poor Miss Kate been crying the last week for him to come home, too. It's too bad—but, poor child, she's got 'nuff to cry 'bout, the Lord knows, for she's done sacrificed herself and her nig-

gers to that white man's hansum face and glib tongue. Peter says dat white man's done nothing but play cards and cuff him 'bout since they's been gone, and 'fore he'll go another sich jaunt with dat man, he's gwine to ax Miss Kate to send him 'long with some speculator to the Mas-sissippi," was the breathless response.

"Well, Rachael, I'm 'fraid thar's whar we're all gwine; and I've been thinking so ever since I he'd Mr. Raymond tell Miss Kate that I was a lazy, trifling, good for nuthin old rascal, and dat she's done made a fool of me. Soon's ever I he'd he sprung from Yankee land, I know'd he had no marcy on poor nigger. Our white folks are r'al gentlemen and ladies, and is satisfied with nigger's work, cause it sure if 'tis slow, but dem thar Yankees always kills the goose to get the golden egg. If ever they git hold of a nigger, they go sell him right straight and put the money in their pockets, cause they's 'fraid nigger 'll git sick and die, and den they lose him. Well, well, the Lord have marcy upon us, and Miss Kate too, for she's a r'al born lady; but as for dat white man, de devil's got a bill of sale for him long ago, and de sooner he take him home de better for her, and us too. It does seem 'tis nuff to make de old masters rise out of their graves to see the awful doings on this plantation."

Alas! it was all too true. For after a lapse of time, by a single throw of the treacherous dice, the noble ancestral mansion of the Sunderlands passed into a stranger's hand

In a lovely cottage which overlooked the banks of the Chattahoochee we find the residence of Henry Sunderland, who was a member of another branch of the family. Mr and Mrs. Sunderland were well known throughout this section of country for their benevolence and kindness to the sick and afflicted—the widow and orphan. Many a

poor wounded spirit has been cheered by their Christian sympathy and generous deeds, and grateful hearts are daily beseeching Heaven for blessings upon the heads of that noble man and his good wife.

At the time of which I write, a merry, happy group were gathered around the pleasant fireside, which consisted of Mr. and Mrs. Sunderland, several noisy, frolicsome boys, together with a fair girl who had scarcely numbered a dozen summers. Her hazel eyes and dark-brown hair, so unlike others of the party, plainly indicated that she had not always been a member of the household. She was a Sunderland, however, and, it was often remarked, bore a striking likeness to her cousin Kate. True, she was an orphan; yet her merry laugh and cheerful countenance were unmistakable evidences of contentment and happiness in that, her adopted home.

A loud peal from the door-bell announced a visitor, and brought the conversation to a close. Very soon a singular apparition presented itself.

A tall, strange-looking woman of commanding appearance, with dark flashing eyes and long waving hair, which fell like a shining veil around her fine form, which was covered, but not concealed, by a coarse calico gown much too short to hide her dainty ankles, and rough shoes which incased her small feet. A dark shadow beneath the long lashes gave to her eyes a peculiar expression, reminding one of a frightened deer, as she stood in the door-way and regarded the party with much interest. Suddenly her pale cheeks flushed, and a smile like the moon's soft ray lighted her face, then quickly approaching the young girl, she remarked, in a soft sweet voice:

"You are my cousin, Miss Sunderland, I suppose; I am Kate Sunderland, of Prospect Hill, Virginia. As I was passing through this State, I have taken the liberty of calling on my relatives, hoping that I might induce them to

honor me in return with their presence at the old family mansion."

Then with the grace and dignity of a queen she gave to each one a regal bend of the head, and seated herself, amid the consternation of each one present.

Alas! it could not be doubted: Kate Sunderland, the once proud and beautiful heiress, was a deserted wife, a harmless but hopeless maniac. A stranger in a strange land, without money or friends, until Providence directed her to the hospitable roof and generous care of her kinsman, Henry Sunderland.

Mr. Mason, the gentleman who accompanied her, stated that while seeking a settlement for himself he had found her wandering alone amid the forest, in a distant part of the State of Alabama. She informed him that her object was to find a conveyance to take her back to Virginia. She gave her name as Miss Kate Sunderland, and proved her right to it by showing an elegant locket, which she wore suspended from her neck, with that name engraved upon it.

The unfortunate condition of the poor creature could not be mistaken, and fearing to leave her alone in the wilderness, he followed her to a cabin, where he was told by its inmates that several months previous she had been left by a gentleman, whom they had reason to think was named Raymond. Although he had promised to return for her in a few weeks, he had never since been heard from. Also, that while this person remained, her fear of him was so great that she would often crouch behind the door, or in some hiding-place, and there remain until she supposed he had left the house.

Mr. Mason was induced, by her delicate, ladylike appearance, to believe her story. And being well acquainted with the character of Mr. Henry Sunderland, whom he knew to be a Virginian by birth, he had taken the liberty of introducing her to his notice.

It was a labor of love for these Christian relatives to array in suitable attire the faded form of their unfortunate cousin, and to contribute in every way to her comfort and pleasure.

When in company with ladies, she would converse with ease and fluency, and would often astonish the listeners by her thorough knowledge of ancient and modern literature; but on the approach of a gentleman she would immediately seek some obscure corner, and there remain until relieved of his presence.

It was presumed that the conduct of her husband toward her had been of such a nature that she dreaded his return; and from the startled glance she gave, feared that every footstep might prove to be that of the cruel man whose name she now refused to bear.

When allowed, she would amuse herself by the hour in decorating the person of her cousin Annie, with every available trinket and piece of incongruous finery, telling her at the same time that she did not dress as became a Sunderland: "But when I return to Virginia I will supply you with a suitable quantity of silks, satins, and velvets; and I shall take great pleasure in replenishing your jewel-boxes, for allow me to say, my dear little cousin, that in this particular you are sadly deficient."

If left alone, she would suffer from great depression of spirits, and often, in soft, plaintive tones, would sing that beautiful song from Lalla Rookh:

Oh! ever thus, from childhood's hour,
I've seen my fondest hopes decay;
I never loved a tree or flower,
But 'twas the first to fade away.
I never nurs'd a dear gazelle,
To glad me with its soft black eye,
But when it came to know me well,
And love me, it was sure to die!

Now, too—the joy most like divine
Of all I ever dreamt or knew,
To see thee, hear thee, call thee mine,—
Oh, misery! must I lose that too?

One day Annie said to her: "Cousin Kate, you sing so sweetly I suspect you are a fine musician; will you not play some for us?"

"Oh yes! I will play if you wish me. At one time I was called the finest amateur performer in Virginia; but that was long ago, when my heart was light and gay. Since then a change has come 'o'er the spirit of my dream.'"

She seated herself at the piano with grace, and with skill her fingers glided over the keys, from which sprang sounds of delicious melody. Gradually the music changed—then a voice, like the tender wail of a broken heart, sent forth its sad notes of anguish. Both music and words seemed the work of inspiration. Tears burst from Annie's eyes as she listened to the maniac's impromptu lay:

Long ago she stood in her youthful pride,
That careworn wife, then a beauteous bride;
And her downy cheek wore the bright spring bloom,
As she fondly clung to her noble groom,
Long ago, long ago!

But the rose on her cheek has wither'd now;
Sorrow and care have furrowed her brow;
And the joyous heart of that blushing bride
Will never more throb with its wonted pride,
Never more, never more!

The accents of love that fell on her ear
Will be heard no more from the lips so dear,
Of the false one, who vow'd, in gallant pride,
Forever to love and cherish his bride,
Long ago, long ago!

And oft, when her heart was swelling with pain
At his cruel words and his rude disdain,
She'd turn and wipe away the bitter tears,
And sigh for the love of happier years,
Long ago, long ago!

Silent and sad sits the poor lone one now,
With her aching heart and throbbing brow;
For despair, like a pall, hangs o'er the life
Of that loving but now forsaken wife,
All alone, all alone!

'Tis sad, indeed, to watch the parting breath
Of lov'd ones stricken by the hand of death;
But shed no tear for them, their sorrows o'er,
Hope whispers you will meet to part no more,
No more, no more!

Weep for the broken heart—true love slighted;
Its fond hopes crushed, its prospects blighted;
And curse the cruel wretch whose fiendish art
Has won, then broke, a gentle woman's heart,
Long ago, long ago!

When Raymond first discovered that the mind of his wife was being affected by the rapid transition from wealth to penury and want, together with his constant ill treatment and neglect, he determined to take from her their only child, which was her sole comfort in life. By so doing he hastened the terrible malady. Her mind soon became a complete wreck; and in that roughly-clad woman with disordered intellect there was little to remind one of Kate Sunderland, the dashing belle and wealthy heiress.

Such is the destiny of woman. Give her love, and she craves no greater blessing; then let poverty and affliction come, and with self-denial and heroism that would immortalize one of the sterner sex, she cheerfully battles with the ills of life, and with love as her guiding star, will come

off conqueror at last. Refuse her this boon, and, like a flower which is denied the sunshine and dews of heaven, she will fade, droop, and die.

After remaining some while with her friends in Georgia, her health began to decline rapidly, and she pined for the mountain air of her childhood's home, and the familiar face of the kind guardian of her youth. Poor deluded creature! She firmly believed that on her return to Virginia she would be reinstated in the ancestral home, with all of its wealth and grandeur, and, under the care of her faithful domestics and the paternal smile of dear Mr. Preston, she would regain all the strength and vigor of her youth.

Mr. Sunderland had ascertained, by writing to Virginia, that Mr. Preston still lived, and resided on a small farm adjoining her old home; and with him was Alfred Raymond, the son of his former ward, Kate Sunderland.

Rather than provide for the child himself, or trust to the charity of strangers, as he did in regard to his unfortunate wife, George Raymond had forced upon the old man the care and support of his son, without a word of apology for so doing; and by changing his own locality soon afterward, he cut off all means of communication between Mr. Preston and his wife.

Mr. Sunderland provided a liberal purse and a suitable escort, and sent her to the care of her guardian, who welcomed her with tearful eyes and outstretched arms to his humble home.

Hope had seated itself at her heart, whispering a prospect of future happiness, and pointing to the Old Dominion

and its lovely mountains as a resting-place for the poor weary soul! But, alas, alas! as she drew near the long-sought Mecca, it leaves the wounded heart to break and die!

Amid her native haunts they laid her down to rest; and above that lonely grave rises, in majestic grandeur, a lofty peak of the Blue Ridge, the only monument to mark the resting-place of Kate Sunderland, the gambler's wife!

There, broken heart—
Poor broken heart, farewell!
The pang is o'er—
The parting pang is o'er,
Thou now wilt bleed no more;
Poor broken heart, farewell!
No rest for thee but dying,
Like waves whose strife is past,
On death's cold shore thus early lying,
Thou sleep'st in peace at last—
Poor broken heart—poor broken heart, farewell!

Mr. Preston did not long survive the untimely death of his adopted daughter, and by his last will Kate's son, Alfred Raymond, became the possessor of his little property, and Mr. Henry Sunderland was appointed his guardian. So, by the singular and wise interposition of Providence, Alfred Raymond became domiciled under the hospitable roof where, a short time before, his unfortunate mother had been kindly sheltered and affectionately tended.

Among the numerous club-rooms or gambling saloons of Paris, there is one conspicuous for its unique and splendid beauty. Its circular walls are lined with mirrors, and richly-carved Corinthian pillars of spotless white support the exquisitely frescoed ceiling. So deceptive was the reflection and re-reflection, that it seemed a hall of intermin-

able length, carpeted with glowing crimson, and studded with elegant columns and courtly figures.

It was a scene of oriental magnificence, which was well calculated to fascinate the eye and intoxicate the senses of a novice; but the parties around the tables were utterly unconscious of their surroundings, and appeared like so many automatons placed there to complete the splendid picture. Silently and quietly they played, betraying no triumph or chagrin; but with studied politeness transferred from one to another papers which often enriched the beggar and beggared the rich.

Conspicuous among one of the groups was a noble-looking personage, of commanding and elegant manners, who for some weeks past had been the observed of all observers. He played high, and invariably won! and Monsieur Raymond was considered the most fortunate as well as among the wealthiest men in Paris.

Miraculous stories were told of his immense estates, both in the United States and South America, which stories were partly confirmed by his extravagant and princely style of living. He was admired by the ladies and envied by the gentlemen, and many of the latter would gladly have assisted, by fair means or foul, to rid Paris of such an unpleasant guest.

Previous to Raymond's introduction into society, Count Moreau had been looked upon as the Adonis of Paris, and his skill in cards was considered unequaled. Great indeed was the count's mortification to find himself despoiled of his laurels by an untitled American, who had sprung up like a mushroom amid the first Parisian circles. For several nights past he had lost large sums of money, and Raymond was the winner. Moreau became reckless, and

staked higher—still the result was the same: he arose from the table and drank freely of wine, then returned and bantered Raymond for another game. It was accepted. The count lost all—and then became desperate and insulting—he accused his partner of fraud. A quarrel ensued, friends interfered, and the count was led from the room. The next morning he refused to pay the debt, and reiterated his belief that Raymond had acted a fraudulent part. A challenge was sent and promptly accepted. They met in mortal combat, and Raymond fell mortally wounded, while Count Moreau escaped unhurt.

A few days afterward, while tortured with remorse, and writhing in the agonies of death, several suspicious-looking persons entered the splendid apartment, charged with legal power to arrest George Raymond for forgery on various houses in New York, London, and Paris. He acknowledged himself guilty of the crimes imputed to him; but death, that grim-visaged monster, had encircled him with its merciless arms, to convey him beyond the reach of an earthly tribunal, where the awful sentence of an avenging God awaited him.

“Kate! poor murdered Kate, thy avengers have come! Retribution is at hand, and I must meet and abide the dreadful sentence of a just and angry God,” were the last words of George Raymond, the gambler.

CHAPTER VIII.

Thou that didst bow the billow's pride,
Thy mandates to fulfill,
Speak, speak to passion's raging tide,
Speak, and say—Peace! be still!

ALICE CARLTON had been absent about two years at a Northern boarding-school, when, one day in early spring, her father and mother were seated in their pleasant parlor speaking of their hopes and fears regarding her.

"I must acknowledge, I see my error now, in allowing her to go from our care, particularly to a city like New York, where her young heart must be more or less exposed to the pernicious influences of their false state of society. I am not at all satisfied with her letters; they indicate little or no improvement, while Annie Sunderland and Lula Graham have made rapid progress in the acquirement of knowledge. I have never listened to a more creditable examination than that of Dr. Hall's scholars—the young ladies certainly surpassed my expectations. Annie's valedictory would reflect honor on a much older writer, while Lula's charming music completely enraptured the audience—her birdlike notes are haunting me still. What is the difference in the ages of the three girls?" asked Mr. Carleton, as he puffed the smoke from his cigar, and watched its graceful wreaths as they floated through the open window.

"Alice is seventeen, a few months younger than Annie; and Lula, I think, cannot be more than fifteen. I doubt whether Alice has made the same improvement, for her letters are too often filled with accounts of the opera, the-

ater, and the absorbing topic of dress, for her mind to be much occupied with books: and worse than all," continued Mrs. Carlton in a grave tone, "she writes to Julia Stanly that once a week Madame L. allows them to have receptions, when such charming beaux are admitted; then follows the most exalted descriptions of their perfections—this one has a delightful foreign air; that one wears such an exquisite mustache; another is so *distingué*, etc. etc. I regret exceedingly that we did not take Mrs. Herbert's advice, and have her educated at home."

"It is too late to remedy that matter now—but we must hasten to recall her, for her expenses are enormous, and I cannot sanction such reckless extravagance in a girl of her age. If I had been apprised of those receptions and their mustached heroes before, I would have summoned her at a much earlier day," said Mr. Carlton, as he impatiently threw the stump of his cigar from the window.

"I am convinced, now, that Mrs. Herbert's views were correct,—that children can be indulged to excess, and that a girl should not be sent from home at the time she needs most the counsel and guidance of a mother. How much I wish that I had possessed the firmness to put this principle into practice; so many troubles and anxieties would have been spared me!" and Mrs. Carlton bowed her head upon the table in gloomy thought.

This woman, though gentle and amiable in the extreme, unfortunately did not possess the counterbalancing traits of firmness and decision of character, and was so yielding in her disposition that a little child might sway her will at pleasure. She was a devoted mother, and her great fault was not in "loving wisely, but too well;" and this excessive amiability was likely to embitter her life, together with the lives of her children.

Poets and novelists may rave of angels in human form,—whose brows are never ruffled by a frown, whose serene

and heavenly minds are never disturbed by angry passions, but in perpetual sunshine they travel on through flowery paths of ease,—such creatures are charming heroines for romances; but, like Dora Copperfield, they should be transplanted to heaven, their abiding-place, before they are called upon to rear immortal souls for eternity. Common sense, and “common humanity,” require a noble, high-minded woman, who has wisdom, discretion, and strength to guide and direct her children in the paths of virtue and uprightness—who will, not in anger, but in love, “chasten her child while there is hope, and let not her soul spare for his crying.” She will rear her children to be bright and shining ornaments of society, and they will crown her gray hairs with blessings and honors,—in their hearts will her memory be engraved; for it was her loving hand that guided them safely through trial and temptation; and she was the instrument which made them what they assuredly will be—noble men and women; glorious and enviable monuments to the memory and worth of their mother.

In the midst of Mrs. Carlton’s reverie, when the past, with its errors and shortcomings, stood arrayed before her in its saddest hues, and good sense was prompting her to redeem these faults, and by them, to receive a lesson for the future, a loud scream, and the voice of a child in angry contention outside the door, was heard to say:

“I won’t! I *won’t!* and if you don’t let me alone, I’ll cry just as loud as I can, and then mamma will make you stop teasing me.”

“Please let me have it, Mars’ Johnny! I’m ’fraid you’ll break it,” said an expostulating voice.

“Oh! oh! oh!” screamed Johnny with such piercing shrillness that it brought his mother to her feet.

A child about five or six years old rushed into the room with his face distorted by passion; in his hand was a small glass dish, which he carelessly handled, while a servant-

girl who followed was vainly urging him to surrender it to her care.

"What in the world is the matter with the child? Why can't you let him be quiet, Nelly?" exclaimed Mrs. Carlton.

"He's got one 'dem cutglass dishes, ma'am, and he's gwine to break it sure, if I lets him keep it."

"Well, let him keep it, then, if nothing else will satisfy him; for really it seems there is no peace in the house for the child." His mother, happy to stop the noise at any risk, seated herself with a sigh of relief.

Johnny left the room, saying, exultingly:

"Oh, yes, *Miss Nelly*! I *told* you so. I know how to fix you." He began dancing about in great glee, when down came the dish with a terrible crash upon the hall floor, followed by a howl from the juvenile despot that was perfectly appalling.

His mother ran out in great alarm, and tried in vain to pacify him; but Johnny refused to be comforted.

"Why, in the name of all that's wonderful, don't you quiet that child out there?" called his father, from the parlor. "If he has broken the glass, give him another and send him out of the house, for this state of affairs is intolerable."

As a last resort, another dish was handed him, which he transported in triumph to his playground.

"Yes!" muttered Nelly, as she followed him. "If you was *my* child, I'd give you 'bout *forty* 'stead of letting you have dem preserve stands to break up like so many clods of dirt, you little injun!"

"Mr. Carlton, we ought really to adopt some measures to conquer that child's rebellious spirit; he is growing to be unbearable. I think we did wrong in allowing him to have another dish after he had broken one," said Mrs. Carlton, as she returned to the parlor.

"Perhaps so; but what is that trifle in comparison to

the peace and quietude of a household?" asked her husband.

"It is true, the value of the glass is not much, but such indulgence may seriously injure the child's character," replied the gentle woman, as she seated herself; and continuing this strain of thought, endeavored to devise some means of bringing about a reform in the government of her family.

Mr. Carlton was a politician—one whose heart and soul was in his calling; and in devotion to his country he sadly neglected the true interests of his children. He sought in the retirement of home, a relaxation from the cares and perplexities of public life—exercising no control over his children, but allowing them every liberty, and sparing no expense to gratify their every wish. He desired to make home happy and agreeable to them; hoping that they would seldom have cause to seek elsewhere for pleasures and amusements, and that when compelled to meet with the necessary trials and disappointments of life, they might look back to their childhood's home as the "dearest spot of earth."

Alas, there were no restraining influences! Religion, that one thing needful, did not dwell, an abiding presence, with its mild and holy luster, within that thoughtless household. No family altar had been reared in their midst, where night and morning these "young immortals" were taught to look beyond this world's dull glare to a purer light on high; or commended to the care of Him who said, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not." Mrs. Carlton's anxious musings were interrupted by the entrance of her son Robert, a fine, manly-looking youth, who said:

"Father, here are the letters and papers from the office; there is no letter from Alice, but one from New York, in a lady's handwriting; perhaps it may contain something

in regard to sister," and he deposited his packages on the table.

Mr. Carlton immediately singled out the letter designated, and commenced its perusal; while his wife approached, and anxiously waited to hear its contents. As she watched his changing countenance, a presentiment of coming evil crept over her heart, and she could scarcely articulate the words:

"What is the matter, Mr. Carlton? If your letter relates to Alice, for Heaven's sake tell me quickly!"

He looked up and confronted her blanched face with one as pale; and in trembling accents replied:

"Alice is quite well, my dear—do not alarm yourself unnecessarily. This letter is from Madame Laurie, who writes that for some time past a clandestine correspondence has been carried on by Alice and a young man by the name of Lovell, who has a sister at the seminary. As soon as this correspondence was discovered, Madame Laurie threatened to write and apprise me; this had the desired effect for awhile. Since then, however, Lovell has boasted that he will marry her at all hazards, in order to retrieve his broken fortunes—as he credits the rumor which makes Alice a wealthy heiress. This idea, I suppose, has grown out of her reckless extravagance; I must go to New York immediately, and put a stop to this affair, if I am under the necessity of blowing the scoundrel's brains out."

"I pray you may not be too late!" feebly gasped the wretched mother, as she clasped her hands in agony, and raised her eyes beseechingly to heaven.

"Father, do you stay with mother, and let me go," said Robert, eagerly. "I can do all that is necessary,—and I am afraid that if Alice has determined to marry him, she will persuade you to consent—for I have often heard her say that she never appealed to you in vain."

"No, my son, I shall never give my consent to such a

marriage! I had rather see her laid in her grave than to have her united to a man who speaks and acts as he has done. I need no stronger proof of his dishonor, than this clandestine manner of engaging her affections, and his base attempt to inveigle into matrimony a young and confiding girl like Alice. By his refusal to consult my wishes, he has acknowledged himself to be a villain, and is aware that his character will not bear the scrutiny of a parent's eyes."

"It is all true, father! and I long to get the wretch in my power who would rob me of my sister and bring disgrace into the family. I would stigmatize him as a coward, and kill him before he should marry her. Oh, Alice! my beautiful sister! I have never loved you so dearly as now, when ruin and degradation threaten you. Why were you sent into temptation, with none to warn you when the serpent was near?" The boy bowed his head in passionate weeping, and his heart-rending sobs added to the anguish of his parents.

"Robert, my dear boy, be more calm. Your imagination has colored this unfortunate affair too highly, I think. Madame Laurie will keep a strict watch over your sister, I do not doubt, until I can reach New York, which will be in four or five days at farthest. Alice shall return home with me, and in a little while her infatuation will be forgotten."

"O God, spare my child! May she never bring sorrow and reproach upon our name, nor send our gray hairs with sorrow to the grave," murmured the wretched mother.

But there was no time for the stricken hearts to indulge their grief—they must arouse themselves, as it was necessary for Mr. Carlton to leave on the first train of cars.

The excitement of preparing her husband for his journey supported Mrs. Carlton until the swift-moving engine bore

him from sight; but when she returned to the house despair took possession of her heart, and with a hopeless moan the stricken mother sunk to the floor. She felt herself struggling amid deep, dark waters, while the waves rolled in maddening fury over her defenseless head.

She had not faith to seek refuge with One who alone had power to still the tempest; but apparently hopeless and alone, with no divine eye to pity or hand to save, she sank insensibly beneath the surges of despair.

* * * * *

Mrs. Carlton was ill—very ill, and by her side stood Robert, the wayward boy, with every noble and generous impulse of his nature brought suddenly into requisition. He seemed fully impressed during this trying ordeal of the responsibility that rested on him as the representative of his father. By a strong effort he controlled his excitement, and issued his orders and directions to the troubled household, with a thoughtfulness and composure which won the respect and admiration of the friends who soon came with anxious hearts and willing hands to his assistance.

Mrs. Herbert and Mrs. Sunderland, whose Christian hearts were ever ready to relieve and aid the distressed, established themselves beside the couch of their friend, who, unconscious of their presence, would call in piteous accents for her absent child:

“Alice, dear Alice! come back to your heart-broken mother! Come, my darling, and give me a cup of water to cool my parched lips—for I am faint and weary. Oh, my daughter! I have nursed you in these arms, and through long sleepless nights your dear head has nestled on my bosom. Yet I did not tire; and now, when your mother stretches out her trembling hand and begs a little water, you refuse to come. She does not heed me! Oh

How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is
To have a thankless child!

"Alice, my darling! I would have died for you!"

In this manner the fond mother mourned her erring child, in broken and feverish accents. Although the true cause of this distress was unknown to her attendants, they imagined from her thoughts being so constantly with Alice, that she had occasioned her parents some trouble, which had probably brought on her mother's illness. Robert could not bring himself to speak of the calamity that threatened to blast the happiness of the family and destroy the life of his mother, therefore he left them to interpret as they pleased her mournful words.

The days wore on; still the fever raged, and her delirium did not abate; but as she manifested a disposition to sleep, Dr. Clinton insisted, one evening, that Mrs. Sunderland and Mrs. Herbert should retire to seek repose as they were beginning to show the effects of fatigue and confinement.

Annie and Lula had petitioned to remain during the night to keep watch beside the sufferer, and gladly availing themselves of the permission granted, entered the sick-chamber with noiseless steps.

Annie quietly seated herself at the bedside, while Lula approached the physician to receive his instructions.

Just then Mrs. Carlton opened her eyes and observed Annie.

As her thoughts still dwelt, in their mournful intensity, upon Alice, she fancied it was her daughter who had at last hearkened to the repeated appeal of her mother.

With a joyful cry, she sprang from her pillow and clasped the startled girl in a passionate embrace.

The delusion appeared to soothe her fevered brain—she grew more calm, and soon, with her burning hand clasped in Annie's, she fell into a fitful slumber.

After this, she would not permit Annie to leave her presence, and would gaze with yearning fondness on the

gentle girl, and readily take everything offered by her hand.

She had also conceived a strong fancy for Dr. Clinton, and whenever he prepared to leave the room she would insist that he should stay and aid Alice in nursing her mother—and so long as they would remain near her, she was perfectly tranquil.

One evening she requested the physician to take a seat at her side, as she wished to have a conversation with Alice and himself upon a matter of considerable importance. They immediately complied with her request; while Lula sat near the open window and watched the stars in the quiet sky,—Nelly availing herself of a housemaid's privilege and occupying a low stool at her feet, for the purpose of indulging in a whispered *lête-à-lête*.

Lula was willing, in a measure, to indulge her, as she well knew that a marked peculiarity of the negro race was to fall asleep if hands or *tongues* were not actively employed—and that if this infirmity should overcome Nelly—scarcely a thunderbolt from Jupiter Tonans could avail to arouse her.

Presently the girl asked :

"Miss Lula, what does you 'spects made massa hurry off so quick to New York? I heard him tell mist'es he gwine to bring Miss Alice home, sure; and——"

"Hush, Nelly! You must not repeat what you heard your master say; if there were any tidings of Alice, which we ought to have known, Robert would have told us. I suppose your master has business in New York."

"No, Miss Lula, 'twas somethin' 'bout Miss Alice! I heard 'em call her name 'gain and 'gain, and they all looked like they jus' been dug out de graves. I thought Miss Alice must be mighty sick; so I asked mist'es, and she said how Miss Alice was quite well—but she looked like she'd drop on de floor when she told me, and I

didn't say no more. Master and mist'es was in de parlor that morning, and all seemed mighty pleasant 'till mars' Johnny, he had to come in hollering, cause I wanted to get a preserve dish 'way from him what he wanted to play with. I know'd he'd break it! but his mamma would let him have it—and sure 'nuff, he let it fall, and broke it into *flinters*. I never *did* see such a child for breaking things in all my life! Aunt Rhody says it's cause he *mocks owls*. Well, he cried so loud that master made me give him another dish. After while I come back to clean up the glass, and mars' Robert was in de parlor with the letters, and I heard 'em say——”

“Stop, Nelly! I told you not to repeat what you heard again.”

At this moment the house-dog, which occupied his accustomed post upon a mat in the veranda, startled them by a loud and mournful howl.

Nelly seemed electrified with terror. She sprang to her feet and commenced wringing her hands and crying aloud:

“Oh, my dear mist'es gwine to die! she's gwine to die! Aunt Rhody said so, Miss Lula, cause she dreamed mist'es was done married ag'in. Oh my poor mist'es! my dear mist'es!” and the affectionate creature wept bitterly.

“Nelly! Nelly!” cried Lula in great alarm, as she caught the girl by the arm. “I am astonished at your being so silly—you will frighten your mistress and make her much worse. Go and drive the dog away immediately;” and she led the shrinking girl through the low window into the veranda.

Frequently had the watchers heard that this most mournful sound, the howl of a dog, was a certain omen of approaching death—and had laughed at it as a negro superstition. Yet when that prolonged wail broke upon the stillness of the dimly-lighted chamber, every heart quaked with vague and sudden terror

"What sound is that? It must be the Banshee's cry, calling me to the spirit-land!" cried Mrs. Carlton, starting wildly from her slumber. "It must be—I have often read of it in Irish legends." After a pause she continued: "If it is so, God's will be done! Oh my daughter! I had hoped before the hour of parting came to have seen you united to one who is worthy of you. I have observed each of you closely; and I cannot possibly be mistaken in the evidence of reciprocal love. I have seen his eyes bent fondly upon you, and noticed that they follow your every movement with delight. I can see that the simplest word from your lips will cause emotions in his heart, while your tell-tale blushes and beaming eyes grow brighter at his coming. Have I not divined your secret, doctor? Is it not true, my daughter?" Then offering a hand to each, Mrs. Carlton anxiously awaited their replies.

It was a strange and striking scene. That luxurious chamber with its dim, shaded light, and startled occupants; Mrs. Carlton's wasted figure, with her long black hair, which, in her excitement, had fallen, loose and disheveled, over her white robe; Annie's shrinking form and hidden face; Dr. Clinton's noble presence; the wild intensity of Mrs. Carlton's gaze, as she looked upon each, and beyond all, her strange words, and the powerful emotions called up by them in the hearts of her listeners, made a singular picture, and one of thrilling contrasts.

The embarrassment of her companions was painful in the extreme; her words were, apparently, but the wild utterance of delirium; yet the method of their madness touched a chord in each young heart that vibrated with intense feeling. Dr. Clinton, however, at length recovered himself with a great effort, and replied with profound emotion:

"You have read my heart aright, Mrs. Carlton—and the dearest hope that heart has ever known is to claim the

privilege of crowning my life with the peerless treasure of her love."

Then taking Annie's trembling hand in his, he continued: "This is not alone the creation of a disordered intellect, Miss Sunderland, but a reality of which I have long wished, yet feared, to speak. May I not now hope that your generous heart will smile upon the life which henceforth will be devoted to your happiness alone?" He waited in breathless silence some look or word of encouragement.

"Do not hesitate to speak, my child—it is not just that you should waver. A mother's blessing awaits your avowal, for Dr. Clinton is worthy of my darling."

"Oh, Mrs. Carlton!" said the young girl in quivering, piteous accents. "I can deceive you no longer. I am not your daughter! not Alice! but Annie Sunderland—and I——"

"Not Alice? not my daughter?" the poor sufferer repeated slowly, and in broken tones. "Yet you have watched beside me with the tenderness and devotion of a loving child."

The shock of this disclosure seemed in a measure to break the spell which bound the fever-stricken intellect. For a few moments she lay apparently lost in meditation, then heaving a deep sigh, she said:

"Would to God you were mine in reality! But, Annie, you have no mother, and can be mine by adoption; and I will transfer this hand to him, who has already won your heart."

She then placed the little trembling hand in Dr. Clinton's, who eagerly clasped it in both his own. Mrs. Carlton placed her hand upon theirs, and said:

"God forever bless and protect you, my precious Annie, and make you as happy as I know you to be good. Love and cherish her, doctor, for a purer heart has never breathed."

"With her consent, I will, so help me God!" fervently exclaimed Dr. Clinton; and the beaming glance from his speaking eyes carried sweet conviction to the heart of gentle Annie Sunderland.

Mrs. Carlton closed her eyes, while a silent tear trickled down her wasted cheek; then, weary and exhausted, she sunk into a troubled slumber.

The next day Dr. Clinton persuaded Mrs. Sunderland that a drive in the fresh air would restore the color to Annie's cheeks; and then the history of the love that had filled his heart so long was told,—his hopes and fears, and the vain efforts to stifle this passion when he thought it would never be reciprocated. He then added: "Suspense had grown intolerable, when Mrs. Carlton's penetration discovered my secret, and brought me to a confession."

We will leave the reader to imagine Annie's reply to this candid avowal,—suffice it to say, that when next alone with her aunt, she acknowledged, with many blushes, her engagement to Dr. Clinton.

Mrs. Carlton's illness assumed a typhoid form, and for weeks she lay in a sort of stupor, utterly unconscious of surrounding objects. Her anxious friends could only watch and hope for a favorable termination of her illness.

Mr. Carlton had been telegraphed for, and in a much shorter space of time than was anticipated he arrived. The family knew upon which train he would reach his home and were watching with anxious eyes for his return.

As he approached the house *alone*, with a feeble, languid step, Robert ran to meet him, and without other greeting, hoarsely whispered:

"Where is she, father? Oh, where is Alice?"

Mr. Carlton lifted his head, and disclosed to Robert's view a pale, haggard face, over which years seemed to have passed since last his son had looked upon it, and in a broken voice replied:

"She is dead *to us*, my son! Never more will Alice Carlton cross the threshold of her childhood's home!—but your poor mother, Robert! How is she?"

"Oh, father, she is yet alive!—but your tidings cannot disturb her now."

A shudder passed over the strong man. He bowed his head upon the shoulder of his son, and they wept together in their bitter sorrow,—that proud statesman and his noble boy, as Heaven forbid we may see men weep again.

CHAPTER IX.

The serpent coiled within the grass,
With open jaw and eager eyes;
Watches the careless wild bird pass,
And lures him from his native skies.

WHEN Mr. Carlton reached New York City, the first acquaintance who accosted him was Mr. Harding, a merchant from his own Southern home. After expressing his pleasure at this unexpected meeting, Mr. Harding remarked:

"By-the-way, Carlton, I dined a few days since with one of the merchant princes here, and was somewhat surprised at the frequent mention of your name. It seems you have quite a reputation for wealth among these nabobs. I was considerably puzzled to understand the import of various inquiries concerning you, and particularly the interest manifested in your family by a young specimen of the genus 'swell,' answering to the name of Lovell.

"After the wine had circulated pretty freely for some time, the mystery leaked out, and the fellow learning that I was an acquaintance of yours, boldly inquired, 'If your daughter was not an heiress in her own right?'

"He was considerably excited by the wine which he had imbibed so copiously, and I did not care to be further troubled with his curiosity, and replied, somewhat testily:

"'Yes; she is worth her weight in gold—fully one hundred and twenty thousand!' You see, Carlton, I valued your daughter, and the 'net weight' of her perfections, at a thousand dollars per pound, and when I saw her last, I

supposed she weighed about one hundred and twenty 'But, sir,' I added, 'you will find such rare birds difficult to ensnare; for the father of this young lady is rather fastidious in his taste!'

As Mr. Harding concluded this speech, he looked up, and was alarmed at the expression on the face of his friend, and hastily exclaimed:

"What is the matter, Carlton? are you ill?"

Mr. Carlton thought it best to keep his own counsel in this affair, at least for the time, and by speaking of his hurried journey and sleepless nights, he succeeded in quieting the fears of his friend.

He soon after excused himself to Mr. Harding, and with spirits greatly depressed by the interview, hastened to Madame L.'s establishment, reflecting bitterly on the reckless speech of Mr. Harding to young Lovell, which he had every reason to fear would seriously affect the destiny of his child.

Madame Laurie expressed much pleasure and great relief at seeing Mr. Carlton, and advised him to remove Alice from New York at the earliest possible moment.

"*Parce que, entre nous, c'est la dernier ressort,*" continued the voluble Frenchwoman, shrugging her shoulders, "as I have lost all influence with *mademoiselle!* And her actions are now controlled *pleinement*—entirely—by the family of Monsieur Lovell."

This family occupied a splendid house on Fifth Avenue, and lived in showy and expensive style.

Miss Lovell was a pupil at Madame Laurie's establishment, and similarity in tastes and character had cemented a strong friendship between Alice Carlton and herself.

The latter young lady was frequently allowed to visit at the house of her friend, where she, of course, met the son and brother. She was charmed by the splendor and luxury which surrounded her, and flattered by the attentions

of the young gentleman, whose talents and virtues were constantly paraded and extolled in her presence.

A rumor of Mr. Carlton's immense wealth had preceded his daughter's introduction to this household, and it was confirmed by her reckless extravagance.

As Mr. Lovell, Senior, was on the verge of bankruptcy, and his son had already arrived at that critical act in the drama of high life, it was decided in family council that a union with Alice, and the consequent control of her supposed fortune, would suspend certain disagreeable operations of a mercenary character, and serve to support the tottering greatness of the house of Lovell.

It was not long before a solemn declaration of love was made to their innocent victim, in true dramatic style; and the poor girl, suspecting no guile, gave in return the devotion and tenderness of a heart's first love.

For reasons best known to himself, young Lovell requested Alice to conceal the engagement from her parents and friends.

Unfortunately, however, for the success of his plans, Madame Laurie had, on one occasion, intercepted a letter from him to the deluded girl, and threatened to divulge the secret to Mr. Carlton if this disgraceful proceeding was not immediately discontinued. At the same time she commanded that Alice's intercourse with the Lovell family should cease entirely.

A promise of obedience to her wishes was unhesitatingly given, and strictly adhered to for a short period; but Alice's young and trusting heart was not proof to the wiles and bewildering influences by which she was surrounded; and ere long constant communication was established between the lovers by means of Clara Lovell's talent for *finesse*.

Seated at a table in the saloon of a fashionable *restaurant* in Broadway, Adolphus Lovell boasted to a friend

that he could marry Miss Carlton at any hour he choose; and as a handsome fortune was to be her dowry, he had concluded to do so without risking a refusal from her parents.

This modest declaration was overheard by two of Alice's numerous schoolmates (personally unknown to Lovell), who, unnoticed by the young gentlemen, were quietly demolishing their ices at another table not far off.

These dutiful pupils, of course, instantly repaired to headquarters, where a vivid account of all they had overheard, including the speech of *le petite maitre*, was repeated to Madame Laurie, who lost no time in apprising Mr. Carlton of the danger to which Alice was exposed.

When Miss Carlton was summoned to the parlor on the day of her father's arrival in New York, great was her astonishment, when on entering the room, his dear, familiar face met her gaze.

For a moment, Lovell and her newly-awakened dreams of love were forgotten, as she clung with unfeigned delight to her father's neck, and listened to his words of fond endearment.

But they soon returned—and with tenfold power claimed their wonted place within her heart and hopes, when, after her affectionate inquiries for the dear ones at home were answered, Mr. Carlton said, suddenly, and with a searching gaze into her face:

"My child, I have come to take you home! Your mother is anxious for your return. She has not been in her usual health for some time past, and sighs for the companionship of her daughter. I shall leave New York early to-morrow morning, and will expect you to be in readiness to accompany me."

For an instant she quailed beneath her father's piercing eye. She longed to throw herself at his feet and acknowledge all—but a remembrance of her promises and the toils

in which she was so firmly bound, came over her with a sudden chill—and she was silent.

"Alice! you certainly do not regret to return to your home with your own father? Why do you not answer me?" And the tone of stern reproach fell like ice upon her heart.

"Oh! no, father! you cannot suppose this for a moment. But your summons was so unexpected—and the time so short!" she replied, in great confusion; then added:

"I wish to make some purchases before leaving the city, and will scarcely have time to complete them, I fear."

"You will have ample time this afternoon to do so, and to make all other necessary arrangements," was his reply.

Then handing her a roll of bank-notes, he took his departure, after promising to return in an hour or two to accompany her on her shopping expedition.

The moment her father left the house, Alice rushed up to her room, and throwing herself upon the bed, she burst into a passionate flood of tears, the consequence of the conflicting emotions which had surged her heart upon learning her father's intention of removing her from the presence she had learned to hold so dear.

"Oh! I cannot go! I cannot leave him without one cheering word of remembrance!" she cried, in anguished tones. "Can it be that some malicious person has betrayed us?—and so defamed the character of my Adolphus that father wishes to tear me away and take me where I shall never see him again? It must be so!—for he looked so cold and stern when he asked if I objected to returning home. Ah! if Adolphus would only consent that I might tell father! I know he would not oppose my wishes when he knows that the happiness of his child is at stake; 'his own little Alice,' whom he has never allowed to appeal to him in vain!"

At recess, when, after missing Alice from recitation and their accustomed haunts, Clara Lovell sought her friendly chamber, and found her lying buried among the pillows of the couch, weeping and sobbing hysterically; and when she learned the cause of her distress she indignantly exclaimed:

"This is some spiteful manœuvre of that fawning sycophant, Madame Laurie! She has informed against you! and traduced the character of my brother, in such a manner that your father has determined to remove you from New York,—and to separate you from Adolphus forever! Oh! Alice, my dear friend, we cannot give you up! my poor brother's heart would break."

And the wily actress actually shed tears; but they were tears of anger and vexation.

It is unnecessary to repeat further what passed between the two girls. When they parted, Alice was apparently calm, for Miss Lovell had left her with the comforting assurance that Adolphus would certainly find an opportunity of seeing her during that afternoon or evening.

Then, after removing all traces of tears from her face, Alice made a hasty toilet preparatory to accompanying her father.

In a short time Mr. Carlton called, in a carriage, for Alice, and was somewhat reassured when he met her now cheerful face, and saw how fondly she remembered the tastes and preferences of each loved one in her distant home, and how eager she was to gratify that preference in her selection of gifts and tokens for all; and with his usual indulgence and liberality, the fond parent knew no greater pleasure than to gratify her every wish.

Finally they entered Stewart's, and at the same moment a handsome carriage drew up, in which sat a young lady and gentleman, who alighted, and, after a few whispered words as they stood on the sidewalk, the gentleman passed

on to another door, while the lady followed in the wake of Mr. Carlton and his daughter.

As Alice was speaking to a salesman in reference to some silks, the lady brushed by, and, on turning, she met the eyes of Clara Lovell, who passed on, with a significant smile, to another portion of the establishment.

Soon after Mr. Harding came in, and paid his respects to Alice; then taking Mr. Carlton's arm, he led him off to a more retired portion of the apartment, and said :

"I called at the hotel to see you in regard to a private matter, and as you were out, and my business pressing, I concluded to await your return. In the mean time this telegram was brought in for you; and seeing you pass soon after, in an open carriage, I decided to take it and follow you,—as such things will not always admit of delay,—and have just now overtaken you "

Mr. Carlton hastily opened the envelope, and read :

"Mother is very ill. Return immediately.

"ROBERT CARLTON."

He staggered, and would have fallen but for the timely assistance of his friend, who drew him to a seat, and offered him a glass of water.

The unhappy man was almost exhausted from fatigue and mental excitement, and had scarcely slept since he left his home. Under these circumstances it was not strange that this startling and painful intelligence should unnerve the affectionate husband. He bowed his head in silent agony, and appeared incapable of thought or action.

Mr. Harding became alarmed; and placing his hand gently on his shoulder, said :

"What is it, Carlton? I hope you have no bad news? Cannot I assist you in some way?"

After a painful interval the answer came, in accents trembling with emotion :

"Oh, Harding! my beloved wife is dying! Bring Alice

to me instantly. We must return home without an hour's delay."

"Let me see you to the carriage first, then I will return for Alice."

When Miss Carlton saw Mr. Harding lead her father away from the sales-room, she availed herself of his absence to speak with Clara Lovell. That young lady had also witnessed his departure, and hastened forward, saying: "Come this way, Alice dear!" and Clara threw her arm around the shrinking girl, and led her rapidly to a distant portion of the building, where she stood face to face with Adolphus Lovell.

Alice was not, as we have seen, entirely unprepared for this meeting, yet the blush deepened on her cheek, and her eyes sparkled with greater brilliancy, as she listened to his softly-whispered words.

"Oh! Alice, my heart's idol! I *cannot* let you go!" he passionately exclaimed, clasping both her hands in his.

"Adolphus! go with me to my father,—let us confess our engagement,—he will not refuse his consent. I am his only daughter, and he will always consult my wishes and happiness."

"No, my Alice! I have been told by those who know him, that your father is a proud, austere man, who would spurn my proposal with contempt. If you would only yield, and become mine at once,—this hour,—he then *could* not part 'two hearts that beat as one,' and I feel assured would not refuse, for your dear sake, to accept me as his son."

"You have been misinformed in regard to my father's character," said Alice, with a faint effort at reserve. "He has ever been kind and indulgent to his children, and for that reason do I wish you to appeal to him."

"It will be useless, dear Alice! If I but mention the subject to him, we will be parted forever. It is for that intent he hurries you away. Fly with me, beloved one! Let the

marriage vow bind us together, then naught but death shall divide us. Come, dear Alice! a carriage is waiting, and warm hearts are ready to welcome you, my peerless bride, to my father's home. Oh! my darling, if you hesitate you are lost to me forever! Come, sweet one! let my home be your home, my friends yours also." He continued: "Alice, your own heart pleads for me I know. Come, ere it is too late! and a life's devotion shall repay you for the sacrifice!" and he drew the trembling hand through his arm.

"My father! my dear father!" murmured Alice, as she was placed in the carriage.

"We will soon kneel together at his feet, my dearest, and ask a father's blessing," was the ready reply of the artful dissembler, as he seated himself at her side; Clara followed quickly—then the fleet horses bore them away.

A clergyman was in attendance, by appointment, at Mr. Lovell's house, and as the party entered the parlors he stood before them, and spoke a few words; then joining their hands, he uttered a brief prayer, and pronounced Adolphus Lovell and Alice Carlton man and wife.

Mr. Harding returned into the department at Stewart's where he had left Alice; but not seeing her, he sought her in the different divisions of the establishment, but with no better success.

He had scarcely noticed her appearance, and could give no accurate description, therefore no assistance could be rendered him in his dilemma.

At length, however, an errand boy remarked: "Perhaps, sir, you are looking for one of those ladies who left the store in company with Mr. Lovell."

"Great God! save and protect the poor child!" exclaimed Mr. Harding, in alarm—then hurriedly continued:

"How long since they left? What direction did they take?"

"About ten minutes, I guess. Can't say exactly, sir," was the reply.

Inquiries were made of outsiders; but no definite information could be obtained.

Mr. Harding had recently been informed of young Lovell's intentions in regard to Alice, and to communicate this intelligence to her father was the cause of his asking a private interview.

The effect produced by the tidings contained in the telegram, rendered it impossible for him to disclose what he had heard, and now he feared it was too late to interfere. The kind-hearted man was completely at a loss; he dreaded to acquaint Mr. Carlton, in his present state of mind, with her disappearance. "Yet if I hesitate, Alice is lost! and though I am ready and anxious to do all in my power to rescue the deluded girl," he thought, as he returned to the carriage, "I am utterly incapable of action—not knowing what direction the fugitives have taken."

"Alice is not in the store, Carlton," he said, with as much calmness as he could assume. "If you are willing, I will accompany you to your hotel, and then go in quest of her."

"Not in the store! Where can she be, then?" inquired her father, listlessly—his thoughts wandering to his suffering wife.

Tenderly and carefully Mr. Harding introduced the subject. He spoke of Lovell's connection with Alice; of the information he had received during the day; and, lastly, of the *employé's* assertion that she had left the store with young Lovell and his sister.

In an instant the father was aroused from his lethargy, and cried out:

"Coachman, drive to Mr. Lovell's, Fifth Avenue. Don't spare your horses!"

The driver knew the place, and drove rapidly, as ordered.

When they arrived at the house, Mr. Harding insisted that his friend should remain in the carriage, while he went in to make the requisite inquiries.

"I think it doubtful," he added, "whether we shall find them here, though I may possibly be able to obtain some information at the door, as the servants may know something of their movements."

The truth was, he feared for Mr. Carlton, who was distressingly excited, to meet young Lovell; and as he concluded that the affair had probably reached its crisis, he knew that nothing save blood would stay the wrath of the hot-brained Southerner.

Mr. Carlton was in no frame of mind to listen to reason, and was about to spring from the carriage, when his friend grasped his arm, and sternly said:

"For God's sake remember your dying wife and helpless children at home."

After a moment, he replied, meekly: "For their sakes I will submit"—then fell back upon the seat.

A footman in showy livery answered the door-bell.

"Is Miss Carlton here?—if so, take me to her immediately!" and Mr. Harding dropped a bank-bill into his eager hand.

"A lady by that name came here about twenty minutes ago, sir, but she is now Mrs. Adolphus Lovell. The marriage ceremony was just over when you rang. Shall I announce you, sir?" was the obsequious reply.

"No! my visit was intended for *Miss Carlton*—not for Mrs. Lovell!"

Mr. Harding left the door, hurried down the steps, and into the carriage,—then said to the coachman, "Drive to the Metropolitan," regardless of Mr. Carlton's breathless inquiries.

"My dear friend," he said at last, "your interference can now avail nothing; it is too late!"

"Alice is married!"

"Merciful God! have pity upon me!" briefly ejaculated the unhappy man, as he buried his face in his hands.

In a few moments after their arrival at the hotel, a note was handed Mr. Carlton from Alice, in which she informed her father of her marriage, and implored his forgiveness. She wrote:

"When you know Mr. Lovell, you will commend my choice, and proudly welcome him as a son to your heart and home. Let us come to you, dear father! to plead our cause, and explain the reason for the apparent rashness of your

"Affectionate daughter,

"ALICE CARLTON LOVELL."

Mr. Carlton was very pale; his countenance had assumed the firmness and rigidity of marble as he read this note.

Then calling for paper and ink, he wrote:

"Alice! It is hard to give you up! but as you have voluntarily resigned all claim to a father's love and protection, I must submit—and henceforth mourn for you as for the dead. The void created in my heart by the loss of a beloved daughter can never be filled by the wife of Adolphus Lovell.

"Perhaps it may not be amiss to inform you, that your willful disobedience and ingratitude has brought a devoted mother to the brink of the grave. Before this reaches you, I shall have obeyed the summons that bids me hasten to the bedside of my heart-broken wife.

"WILLIAM CARLTON."

CHAPTER X.

I bent before thy gracious throne,
And asked for peace with suppliant knee;
And peace was given,—nor peace alone,
But faith, and hope, and ecstasy!

It was April, that month of smiles and tears which Shakspeare often referred to with feelings of intense delight; and truly may all rejoice at the coming of the glorious season that witnessed the advent of this immortal bard, whose versatile genius was typical of the storms and sunshine which alternately reign throughout this lovely month of spring.

With tears and laughter for all time!

he wrote; and the world by general acclamation crowned him with laurels, which will ever remain fresh and green as the emerald buds that greeted his opening eyes.

On the same day of the beautiful month which gave to England and to fame her greatest original poet, he closed his eyes forever on the world he had enriched with language and ideas unparalleled in its history. No less beautiful is this season of "infinite variety" in the land of flowers, where Flora's reign is perpetual. The sweet April wind, laden with the perfume of violets which the bard of Avon loved so well, came softly through the lattice, and gently fanned the fevered brow of Mrs. Carlton.

She was sleeping; and Lula Graham sat beside her couch, anxiously watching the deathlike countenance of the sufferer.

The mocking-birds had formed a choral band in a clump of beautiful Southern "*robinias*," whose drooping racemes of fragrant snowy flowers hung like clusters of pearls from the graceful branches which shaded the veranda.

But the clear sweet notes of the joyous minstrels failed to arouse the exhausted woman, or to recall her worldly spirit from the dream-land where it slept.

Lula had been reading one of those soul-stirring poems of Bishop Heber's, when the delicious melody of the birds recalled her to the beauty of terrestrial things, and suddenly the thought flashed upon her mind that this month was the anniversary of the birth and death of that poet whose sacred harp had sent forth the heavenly strains, which had echoed

From Greenland's icy mountains
To India's coral strand,

and her heart joined in nature's glad anthem that seemed to sing his praise.

She looked out upon the pleasant landscape and thought how sad it would be to bid an eternal farewell to this beautiful home, which nature had adorned with such a lavish hand; then turning to the sleeper, she softly exclaimed:

"Oh! if she should die without being prepared to meet her God! She has given no evidence of a changed heart; and to be hurried, thus unconsciously, into eternity! Oh, it is terrible, agonizing!"

Then falling upon her knees, the orphan girl softly murmured:

"Oh! merciful God! spare her life—restore her in thy good time to health and strength, that she may have a longer season in which to work out her salvation, and be more useful in her station, if it be consistent with thy divine will. If not, restore her to reason before she enters

the dark and silent valley. Let the lamp of the Saviour's love guide her through the gloom, and his arms at last enfold her into heavenly rest. Oh, Lamb of God! that takest away the sins of the world, hear my prayer, and have mercy upon her!"

She arose, and bent over the sleeper to remove a lock of hair which had fallen over her face, and was startled by the sudden change in her countenance. A pleasant smile was about her lips, and a calm, serene expression rested on the brow, which before had worn a look of intense suffering.

As the gentle nurse tenderly arranged the disordered hair, she perceived a slight moisture about her forehead. Then an irrepressible ejaculation escaped from her lips. "Merciful God, I thank thee!"

Mr. Carlton, who unobserved had heard the prayer and witnessed the whole scene, suddenly stood by Lula's side. She pointed to the beaded drops which now stood thickly upon the calm and peaceful brow, and softly whispered:

"She will live."

The anxious husband stooped and listened to the quiet, regular breathing, and assured himself that she was at last in a natural slumber,—then fell on his knees by her side, and for the first time, since as a little child he lisped his prayers in his boyhood's home, with a heart filled with gratitude and love to God, he returned thanks for this ray of hope which had appeared to cheer his deep despondency.

Long and fervently did the grief-stricken man pray by the side of his wife. The mercy and goodness of the great Omnipotent appeared as a silver lining to the thick clouds of sorrow which had so long lowered above his defenseless head.

His ingratitude for the innumerable blessings that had crowned his life was suddenly revealed to him, and his heart cried out:

"What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits unto me?"

Lula was deeply affected by this scene, and was about to leave the room, when he beckoned to her, and said:

"My dear child, I thank you most gratefully for your watchful care and kind attention during this long and painful illness—but more than all, I thank you for that touching prayer, which I trust will be answered according to your first petition. Your love and confidence in the power and mercy of God has helped to bring me to the foot of the cross as a suppliant, to sue for pardon;" then added, with much fervor: "May He, for Christ's sake, grant me remission of sins, and henceforth I will endeavor to devote the greater part of my life to his service. Lula Graham, when I am reminded of your purity and innocence, I cannot believe that God will disregard your prayers. Will you intercede for me?"

"Mr. Carlton, you are laboring under a strange delusion if you regard me in that light. On the contrary, my whole life has been one of error and repentance. The Bible tells us there is none perfect. No, not one." Then she added: "I have often petitioned in my feeble prayers that in your distress you might be drawn to the mercy-seat, where

The hope of the penitent is fadeless and pure.

Christ has said, 'Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' 'Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls; for my yoke is easy and my burden light.' God does not suffer us to plead in vain; his arms are ever ready to receive us. But pardon my presumption, Mr. Carlton," she continued,

blushing deeply, "in offering counsel to one so much my superior in years and intellect. Whenever I speak of the Saviour or plead his cause, I am strangely forgetful of my youth and ignorance."

"My dear child, you have said nothing that does not reflect great credit either on your head or your heart. I admire your zeal, and now feel forcibly the truth and beauty of that verse in the New Testament, where Jesus said, 'I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.'"

A slight movement attracted their attention and recalled them to the bedside. A gentle sigh escaped from the lips of the sleeper, and Mr. Carlton again bent over her to assure himself that it was natural repose. Then seating himself by her side with Hope's whispers to gladden his heart, he patiently awaited the first glance of recognition.

Lula hastened to apprise the household of the favorable change in the beloved patient, and to proclaim her belief that the crisis had passed, and that Mrs. Carlton would live.

This announcement was received with great joy, and Dr. Clinton's arrival was anxiously looked forward to, that he might confirm the hopes thus unexpectedly given to their hearts.

He had received a sudden summons to attend on Mrs. Grant, who had ruptured a blood-vessel in a violent fit of passion, and her life was considered in imminent danger. Thinking that Mrs. Carlton would probably sleep until his return, he considered it his duty to obey the call, notwithstanding inclination might have led him to decline.

When at last his buggy wheels were heard on the graveled road, the eyes of his patient opened, and for the first time she recognized the dear, familiar face of her

husband who had watched so long in silent agony by her side.

With her weary head pillowed on the faithful bosom of her companion, Mrs. Carlton rested, calmly and sweetly, as a feeble babe on the breast of its mother.

Here let us drop the curtain, and leave them in silent communion with their own hearts which are filled with gratitude to God for his great goodness in sparing the life of this, the beloved wife and mother.

Dr. Clinton, finding that his services could be dispensed with for awhile by his patient, Mrs. Carlton, immediately carried out his intention of returning to Mrs. Grant, as he considered her in a very critical situation.

Helpless, powerless, deprived of strength and motion, the physician had left her with no one to care for or pity her, save the poor negroes, whom she had ruled with a tyrant's power, and the kind-hearted but ignorant wife of her overseer.

He sought an opportunity of communicating with Mrs. Herbert, and informed her that when he arrived Mrs. Grant was almost exhausted from the loss of blood; her terror-stricken servants stood around in utter dismay, as she would receive no assistance from their hands. The kind offices of Mrs. Smith, the overseer's wife, were also indignantly repulsed.

When Dr. Clinton entered her room, a sigh of relief escaped her, as she recognized in him the same physician who had attended the orphan, Lula Graham, when she was ill in her house.

She was evidently in great alarm, and readily took from his hand the offered draught, but would accept it from no other.

"Do not leave me, doctor!" she feebly gasped. "They will poison me, if you do! Stay with me, and I will give

you good enough to blot out the cruel, bitter taunts that I heaped upon you years ago, when you helped to rob me of that poor child, whose plaintive cries and pleading looks are haunting me still. Oh, I can never! no, never forget that piercing cry! It has tortured my heart and drives the sleep from my eyes."

It was with great reluctance that the poor woman gave her consent for Dr. Clinton to leave her, although he promised to return as soon as possible.

As he was leaving the room, she signed for him to approach her, and with considerable effort said:

"Doctor, I cannot rest without seeing Lula Graham again,—bring her to me!" with much effort she continued: "I can trust *her*, for she was honest and true. Tell her that I cannot harm her now, for I am more helpless than she was when the coffin-lid closed over her mother—her only friend.

"Go, doctor—go quickly! and bring that child to me. She is almost a woman now; but if the promises of her childhood have not been blighted, she will not hesitate to come on an errand of mercy."

Mrs. Herbert readily gave her consent for the orphan to return with the doctor, and spend the night at Mrs. Grant's, promising to drive over herself the next day and see the invalid.

"Let us see, doctor, what Lula will say about going. It must be optional with her. I shall not try to influence her either way. This visit, I know, will necessarily be a painful one; it will revive many sad and unpleasant reminiscences, which I have striven to obliterate from her memory."

Lula was much affected, and greatly concerned when informed of Mrs. Grant's situation; with tears in her eyes she turned to Mrs. Herbert, and said:

"Dear auntie, do let me go to her! It is so sad to

think of one's suffering, perhaps dying, in a Christian land, without a friend to comfort her last moments. Do let me go, dear auntie !”

Mrs. Herbert kissed the pleading lips of her darling, then bade her hasten her preparations for departure, as Dr. Clinton would leave in a few minutes.

It was with mingled feelings of pity and dread that the orphan girl prepared to go on her Christian mission of charity to the dismal abode of the stern, misanthropical woman, who had crushed the sweet and joyous spirit of her early years.

But she refused to hearken to the voice of the tempter, who, bidding her turn from such scenes, would thus allure from the path of duty, and concluded her preparations for the melancholy visit.

Though young in years, Lula Graham did not indulge in that species of piety which looks to its own ease and safety, leaving suffering humanity to work alone its deliverance; but like the Marys and Phebes, the Priscillas and Dorcases of the apostolic age, she sought to assuage the sorrows of the sick and afflicted, to reclaim the outcast, to clothe the needy, and instruct the ignorant, knowing herself no greater happiness than when she had assisted in promoting that of others. With her youthful heart filled with such pure and holy desires, she would often

Seek the lonely cell

Where modest want, and silent anguish dwell;
 Raise the weak head, sustain the feeble knees,
 Cheer the cold heart, and chase the dire disease.
 The splendid deeds, which only seek a name,
 Are paid their just reward in present fame;
 But know, the awful all-disclosing day,
 The long arrear of secret worth shall pay;
 Applauding saints shall hear with fond regard,
 And He, who witness'd here, shall there reward.

CHAPTER XI.

Thus while we dwell in this low scene,
The Lamb is our unfailing screen ;
To Him, though guilty, still we run,
And God still spares us for his Son.

MANY were the painful memories that crowded about the heart of Lula Graham, as she approached the house where years ago she received her mother's last kiss and blessing. That mother's spirit had

—passed to heaven—but oh, how dark !
The sky from which her smile has gone—
No star now lives to guide my bark,
No fount to cheer my spirit on !
Yet, till my life shall cease to be,
Her memory shall abide with me !

Thoughts that filled her little heart on that dark and dreary day, came rushing back in their lava-tide of sorrow, as she rode along the avenue and gazed upon the door through which her mother's lifeless form had been borne to its last resting-place. Its solitary mourner was herself,—a poor, lonely little one, whose tears and sobs of bitter anguish were the outpourings of her crushed and bleeding heart.

'Tis past, 'tis past, but I gaze on it now
With a quivering breath and a throbbing brow ;
'Twas there she nursed me, 'twas there she died.

And a sacred thing was that silent dwelling to the heart-broken widow's only child.

When they entered the house, Dr. Clinton lost no time in seeking his patient.

Lula remained in the hall until Mrs. Grant was prepared to receive her; and the servants soon recognized in the tall, beautiful young lady, the lovely child whose presence had so often been like a sunbeam on their dark, cheerless lives, and flocked around her with many expressions of joy and thankfulness at her return.

Old Elsy hobbled up with her stick, and cried out, with tears streaming down her withered cheeks:

"Bless de Lord, oh, my soul! for sending de gardi'n angel once more to dis benighted place."

Dr. Clinton presently reappeared, and requested Lula to enter the sick woman's chamber. It was not without considerable trepidation that she followed him into the presence of one whose angry frown and harsh words had been a constant terror to her childish heart.

But when she approached the bed and saw the strong form laid powerless, and the deathlike pallor of that face which had been so seldom freed from passion's purple stain, her heart grew strong with sympathy, and a desire to alleviate the suffering so strongly depicted in that ghastly countenance. She clasped the withered hand, and exclaimed:

"Oh, Mrs. Grant, I am so sorry to find you ill! I have come to nurse you—and if possible, to repay you for your kindness in giving me shelter so long after my dear mamma died."

Dr. Clinton had urged upon Mrs. Grant the necessity for keeping silent, and for some time she held the little hand in her feeble grasp, without making any reply.

At length, with much difficulty, she said:

"Child, I cannot tell what induced you to obey my wish. You certainly have no cause to love me! But, perhaps, you imagined I might die, and leave you some of my hard-

earned money. If that was your reason for coming, you'll be sadly mistaken, for I have no such intentions. You have never deceived me, Lula Graham, tell me why you came?"

The old woman, almost exhausted from the effort to speak, fixed her dull, languid eyes upon the orphan's truthful face, and awaited her answer.

"Mrs. Grant, I heard that you were very ill, with no one to attend you, and I came hoping to be of service; beside this, I understood you expressed a desire to see me. If you had not done this, I would have come and offered you every assistance in my power; because I felt grateful for your protection when I was alone in the wide world, without a shelter from storm and tempest. If you suspect me of wrong, or if my presence is disagreeable, I had better return."

A tear glistened in Lula's eye as she concluded these words, and she attempted to withdraw her hand from its feeble clasp.

The helpless woman resisted the movement, and hastily replied :

"No! no! Stay where you are, child! I believe what you say, Lula; and may God forgive me for my harshness to a poor little orphan."

She released her hold, and with her trembling hand raised a handkerchief to stanch the blood, which had suddenly begun to flow from her lips.

The usual remedies were applied, but for a long time the violence of the hemorrhage defied every attempt of the physician to arrest it.

Throughout the long weary night, Dr. Clinton and Lula watched in that cheerless chamber, beside the friendless woman whose fear of treachery on the part of the servants, forbade them to approach her. When the gray tints of morning began to illumine the eastern horizon, the anodynes

had taken effect, and the wretched, conscience-stricken creature fell into a short slumber. Although faint and weary, Lula continued to exert herself in behalf of the sufferer until, with her previous exertions, and present loss of rest, she was ready to sink from fatigue. Dr. Clinton, at length, took from her tired hand the fan which she still gently waved, and led her to the door. Then with quite a decided manner, he commanded her to seek rest in a distant apartment.

She saw from his resolute manner that he intended to be obeyed, and accordingly betook herself to repose. The physician returned to his vigil—watching the fluctuating pulse and shortened breathing; and his thoughts passed in melancholy review over the sad history of his unfortunate patient, whose whole life had been spent in amassing wealth at the risk of losing her soul. Now, perhaps, the time would shortly arrive when she must render an account of her stewardship, and her soul would be demanded of her. Oh! the bitter remorse of the sinner, and the dreadful punishment that must follow that awful sentence from the Great Tribunal: “Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.”

Such thoughts banished sleep from the eyes of this Christian physician, and bowing his head, he prayed softly:

“O merciful God! have pity and compassion upon this helpless sinner! awaken her to a sense of her alarming condition, and save her from thy just wrath! Save her from that dreadful sentence at the last great day! Save her for the sake of thy beloved Son, who endured for us the agonies of Gethsemane and the painful death of the cross.”

He lifted his head at the conclusion of this petition and found the eyes of his patient fixed, with horror and amazement in their gaze, upon him.

"Dr. Clinton, am I dying? Am I in immediate danger of death, and the wrath of God? If so, save me! Oh! save me from everlasting torment, where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched," she cried, in piteous tones, as she stretched her trembling hands toward him.

"It is impossible for me to say what will be the result, Mrs. Grant. You must endeavor to remain perfectly quiet, and put your trust in Him who 'doeth all things well.' Any excitement may produce a return of the hemorrhage, which would probably injure you seriously."

"Remain quiet—when death, the grave, and hell are waiting to receive me? Impossible!" she exclaimed, hoarsely. Then covering her face with her hands, silent tears trickled through the long, bony fingers.

Dr. Clinton endeavored in vain to calm her troubled spirit, by telling her to cling to Christ,—that it was not too late:

To-day a pardoning God
Will hear the suppliant pray,
To-day, a Saviour's cleansing blood
Will wash thy guilt away.

The poor woman struggled long to quell the inward tumult. Some time elapsed ere she spoke or withdrew her hands.

At last she looked up, and called, feebly:

"Lula! Lula!"

Not seeing her, she turned an angry look upon the doctor, and asked:

"Where is that girl? Have you robbed me of her again?"

Dr. Clinton answered:

"Oh, no! she is here, and will remain as long as she can be of service to you. She is obeying my orders just now, by sleeping, or taking some rest in another room,

which is very necessary for her, after watching with you through the whole night."

"Call her, doctor! call her to me—what is one night's fatigue, compared to an eternity of torture? Oh! save me from its dreadful pangs—and all of my possessions shall be yours. Save me, doctor! save me, or I perish!"

Her companion endeavored to persuade her that God alone could rescue the erring soul; that he was ready and willing to pardon all for the sake of his dear Son, if they would repent and believe in him.

"There is no hope! no pardon! for a wretch like me. I have forgotten my God,—despised my fellow-creatures, to worship the great Mammon! Oh! how that long-neglected book rises up before me with its warning voice: 'What shall it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his own soul?'" she exclaimed, despairingly.

"'Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be made white as snow;' ask God to give you a clean heart, and 'renew a right spirit' within you. His ear is ever open to the penitent sinner's cry, my friend."

"Call Lula! *She* will not deceive me,—truth and innocence are stamped upon her brow, and the love of God and his spirit reign in her pure heart. Call her quickly! My time is short, and the King of Terrors approaches. Bid her come!"

Dr. Clinton hastened to obey, fearing that this great excitement would have a fatal effect.

When Lula entered the room Mrs. Grant grasped the little hands in both of hers, and gazing intently into the young girl's gentle face, said:

"Child, I am dying; tell me truly if God will pardon such a vile wretch as you *know* me to be? Is it not too late to repent after a lifetime spent in league with Satan? Oh, the torture! the remorse of this hour! Oh! how the poor negroes would rejoice if they knew what agony I was

suffering now on account of my harsh treatment of them. Tell me, Lula Graham, is there any hope for me? any way of escape? Is it not too late?"

"Mrs. Grant, it is never too late to repent! You remember the serpent of brass that was lifted in the wilderness for the healing of the Israelites, and all who looked upon it were made whole. To save *us*, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was nailed to the cross; and all those who will look up to, and believe in him, will surely be saved from endless death."

"I fear it is too late! too late! when remorse comes with the agonies of death!"

"The dying thief confessed his sin, turned his pleading eyes on his crucified Saviour, and said: 'Lord, remember *me* when thou comest into thy kingdom.'"

"On what promise was that hope of pardon based?" the poor creature eagerly demanded.

"Jesus said unto him: 'Verily I say unto thee, this day shalt thou be with me in paradise,'" was the gentle reply.

"Lord, I believe! help thou mine unbelief!" feebly gasped Mrs. Grant as she closed her eyes—then a half audible prayer was heard from her lips.

Faint and exhausted she lay, struggling with mental and physical anguish, while the sympathizing hearts by her side were silently pleading in her behalf.

At last a ray of hope appeared to brighten her face; she opened her eyes, and faintly whispered:

"Pray for me! Pray for me!"

Dr. Clinton saw that the arrow of conviction had entered the stern woman's heart, and falling upon his knees, he plead, in touching and beautiful language, the penitent's cause. Girded with the armor of faith, he fearlessly approached the mercy-seat, and wrestled like Jacob, in prayer, for a blessing on the unhappy woman.

When he arose her eyes remained closed; no word or motion gave token of life; but her face had relaxed from its rigid look of despair, and assumed a more gentle and quiet expression, which almost assured her anxious attendants that their prayers were heard and answered.

After a lengthy interval of painful suspense, a deep-drawn sigh escaped from her troubled breast,—then clasping her hands, she exclaimed, with much fervor:

“God be merciful to me a sinner!”

But the inward struggle had been too great for exhausted nature.

A small crimson stream began to flow slowly, but with fatal effect, from between the quivering lips.

Yet with hands clasped, and eyes lifted beseechingly to heaven, the sufferer heeded it not as her heart sent forth the humble publican’s prayer:

“God be merciful to me a *sinner*!”

About noon Mrs. Herbert arrived, and gave a favorable account of Mrs. Carlton’s condition. Feeling anxious about Lula, and compassion for the lone, friendless invalid, she had come to assist in the arduous duty of nursing. When she entered the sick-room Mrs. Grant recognized her immediately, and offered her hand; her lips moved, but no sound was audible save the word

“Forgive”—as she clasped Mrs. Herbert’s hand, and sought with her eyes the forgiveness she asked.

“As freely as I hope to be forgiven!” replied Mrs. Herbert, much moved, as she pressed the feeble hand; and tears filled her eyes, as she looked on the sad change which had taken place in that once strong, stern being.

For the next few days, Mrs. Grant could only speak in monosyllables. She was restless and uneasy, if Lula left the room; and would hold out her hand to the orphan whenever she returned; then with the white slender fingers imprisoned in her coarse, rough palm, which had so often

given the stinging blow, she would remain quiet, with her eyes riveted on the fair young face.

One day she requested Lula to read a chapter from "the precious Bible;" and, occupying the position just described, the following words fell gently and soothingly on the ear of the anxious listener:

"Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me.

"In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

"And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.

"And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know."

When the chapter was ended, Mrs. Grant exclaimed, with much feeling:

"Thank you, thank you, sweet lamb of the flock of Christ! *You* have made the way clear to me. Go now and send Dr. Clinton to me."

Soon after this, a messenger was dispatched to the city, and in a short time returned, accompanied by a well-known lawyer, together with several other gentlemen. When Mr. Harris, the attorney, was seated with his writing materials at Mrs. Grant's bedside, she then released her hold of Lula's hand, and said:

"Leave me for a few moments, dear child; but promise that you will return when I call."

The promise was readily given; and signing for others to follow Lula from the room, the sick woman was left alone with the man of law.

Scarcely thirty minutes had elapsed, when the gentlemen were summoned to return and witness the last will and testament of Mrs. Grant. When they entered, she held the sealed document in her hand, and silently directed

each one to place his signature upon it. After complying with her request, it was given into Mr. Harris's charge, and its contents were to remain inviolate until some time after the testatrix should be numbered with the dead.

For nearly a week after this, Mrs. Grant lingered on the threshold of eternity. The grace of God had wrought a thorough reformation in her singular character. Although the nature of her disease prevented any oral evidence of this change of heart, yet her gentleness and fortitude during the last painful days of her illness gave certain manifestation of divine aid.

The day preceding her death, she expressed a desire to see and bid farewell to her negroes.

It was hard to say with what spirit this unexpected request was received by her degraded subjects; but with becoming gravity they formed themselves into a procession and marched slowly and solemnly through her room.

One by one the sable forms approached the bedside, and the once dreaded mistress meekly offered her hand, and said:

"Farewell!"

It is a singular fact, that a death-bed or funeral possesses a peculiar fascination for the negro race; and no distance is too great to deter them from witnessing a scene of this nature. But the present was one to call forth every latent feeling of sympathy, as they gazed for the last time on the breathing though prostrate form of their mistress.

At the first sight of that face on which death had placed his awful signet, their tears began to flow, and soon the house was filled with sounds of wild and noisy lamentation.

"Farewell! Forgive my harsh dealings with you. I leave you all in good hands. You will not regret me!" were the last sounds of her failing voice which met their ears.

Mrs. Grant still clung with special fondness to Lula, as

if she were the support of her dying pillow, and a connecting link between earth and heaven; and when the last sad agony was over, and those gray eyes closed on earth forever, that cold, lifeless hand was still held by the affectionate girl, who shed tears of real sorrow for her who had cruelly embittered the first sad years of her lonely orphanage.

And such the child whose early feet
The paths of peace have trod;
Whose secret heart, with influence sweet,
Is upward drawn to God.

CHAPTER XII.

And on that cheek, and o'er that brow
 So soft, so calm, yet eloquent,
 The smiles that win, the tints that glow,
 But tell of days in goodness spent,
 A mind at peace with all below,
 A heart whose love is innocent.

ANOTHER year has rolled around, and we find Mrs. Herbert and Lula Graham seated in one of the delightful parlors at Belvoir.

Not one of those rooms kept closed and in Cimmerian darkness to preserve their cheap, gaudy furniture, but one fitted up with substantial elegance and comfort, combined with exquisite taste and refinement.

On entering this room, the eye will be attracted by a splendid painting of Raphael's faultless "Madonna della Seggiola," with the infant Saviour in her arms. A sweet maternal tenderness is beaming from her soft hazel eyes, as her cheek is fondly pressed to that of her holy child. St. John stands by her side in meek adoration of the infant God, and his look implies: "It is he whose shoes I am not worthy to bear." This painting is supported by a beautiful slab of Parian marble which is resting on the heads of graceful flower-girls in Caryatic attitudes, whose rare beauty and exquisite finish proclaim them works of Italy. At a little distance is seen a copy of Titian's daughter lifting a plate of fruit; in this picture, his peculiar talent for representing the female form, and the magic of his coloring, are developed to the fullest extent. A morning landscape of cattle fording a stream, by Claude Lor-

rairie; its warm sky, admirable distances, and the glassy surface of water have often been imitated, but never equaled. There, too, is an exquisite specimen from the pencil of our own poet-painter, Washington Alston, besides others of no ordinary cast. Handsome *Sèvres* vases, filled with sweet flowers, were placed on rosewood tables of the *Louis Quatorze* style; crimson silk curtains were looped back from the open windows, displaying an inner network of richly embroidered lace; a velvet carpet of the same glowing hue as the draperies covered the floor, and gave a character of quiet yet luxurious repose to this favorite parlor. An elegant grand piano-forte, with its long row of glittering pearl keys, and a graceful French harp, often send their cheering notes over the hills and far away.

A few specimens of exquisite statuary gleamed amid the rich draperies—conspicuous among which, and placed in the recess of one of the large bay-windows, its beauties enhanced by the shading of misty lace,—was the celebrated group by Wickman, of Berlin, “The Fortune-teller,” two female figures, models of grace, refinement, and *naïveté*, which had been purchased some time before by Mr. Herbert, from the “Exhibition” in London.

Handsome rosewood *étagères* were filled with rare oriental curiosities—delicate carvings in ivory, sandal-wood, and mother-of-pearl; and beautiful shells, glowing with all the colors of the rainbow, gathered from the silver strand of the far-off isles in the Indian Sea.

Other specimens of art and articles of *virtu* might engage the attention, were it not for the superior attraction of the *tableau vivant* near the open bay-window.

Mrs. Herbert, with a calm, sweet face, expressive of dignity and gentleness, is attired in a simple robe of white muslin, with a tiny cap of delicate lace, which rests gracefully on her finely shaped head with its coronal of dark glossy hair. On the table beside her is placed that *sine*

qua non of the Southern matron—a key-basket. Like a full-blown flower she appears, to the budding loveliness of Lula Graham.

Yet perfectly unconscious of possessing any claims to beauty, sits the orphan girl,—her fair, transparent complexion contrasts exquisitely with the azure tint of her morning dress. Her dark-brown hair is rolled in wavy masses from her broad forehead, and wound in a rich heavy coil at the back of her head. Her sweet mouth is expressive of great sensibility, her nose is finely shaped, and beautifully arched eyebrows and long silken lashes shade deep-blue eyes, which are large and dovelike, with a singular, almost holy expression beaming from their depths. Her form is rather above the medium height, and

Whate'er she does, where'er her steps she bends,
Grace on each action silently attends.

Altogether there is a peculiar fascination about Lula Graham which few could resist.

Mrs. Herbert inquires:

“When does Annie Sunderland’s wedding take place?”

“It is not yet determined, I believe; Dr. Clinton hopes ere long to be able to provide a handsome establishment, and, although Annie cares so little for the luxuries of life, she prefers waiting a few years, rather than encumber him at present with a dowerless bride.”

“Perhaps it is best,” was the reply, “for Annie is too young to be burdened with the cares of a household. Yet I should rejoice to see her comfortably settled in life.”

“Mr. and Mrs. Sunderland are strongly opposed to her marrying so early,” said Lula; “they insist that she should wait until the doctor has amassed more wealth, and they positively refuse to give their consent until this has been done. Annie is perfectly willing to abide by their de-

cision, but Dr. Clinton is importunate, and pleads for an early consummation of his hopes."

"Love has perhaps blinded his judgment," said the elder lady, with a smile; "I have no doubt that Mr. Sunderland's ideas are correct, and I hope they will respect his opinions and be guided by him in this affair."

Just then Mr. Herbert and Charlie entered the room. Lula vacated her seat, and invited the former to take her place at his wife's side; then slipping to a table she filled a silver goblet with ice-water and offered it to him.

"Thank you, darling! This is quite refreshing after a drive through the sun this warm morning. I have been quite busy all day, and unusually excited, consequently I find your attentions doubly acceptable."

"Charlie, shall I wait on you?" asked Lula, as he threw himself upon the sofa, feigning great weariness.

"I think you may, Birdie! for I am completely exhausted by my great mental exertion this morning."

"Why, what can the matter be? I am filled with wonder and anxiety," cried Mrs. Herbert.

"Oh, I had an intricate law case in hand, which perplexed me beyond measure."

"What was it? Do let us know the particulars!" exclaimed his mother and Lula in the same breath.

"Well, last night Mr. Jones's hogs committed trespass on Mr. Smith's garden, completely demolishing his valuable potato crop, besides doing various other damage of a serious nature. Then Mr. Smith's dogs were set on afore-said hogs, by some person or persons unknown, which dogs, in a vindictive spirit of the *lex talionis*, made such fearful onslaught on said hogs, that they were all minus one ear, some had 'no ear at all,' while others had their caudal extremities terribly mutilated. On hearing the row, the said Jones armed himself to the teeth, and with murderous thoughts intent, cut short the brilliant career of the

finest dog that ever 'treed' a 'possum! Shocking inhumanity!

"Knowing that I had but recently returned from the law-school, with my head full of valuable legal lore, they concluded that the fittest and most proper thing to be done was to call on Charles Herbert, Esq., Attorney-at-law, to obtain a redress of grievances."

"There, there, Charlie!" Mrs. Herbert laughingly cried, "we will not trouble you to go into further details; from appearances, however, we might suppose that your father had been employed to contest the matter with you."

Mr. Herbert and Lula joined in the laugh, but the young gentleman maintained his gravity.

"This is certainly a brilliant opening," said Lula, teasingly; "such ample scope and field for talent! but you are annoyed because they scarcely wait for your 'sign' to dry before they rush to your office; each party anxious to secure the services of the eminent pleader. They perhaps see in prospective the woolsack and gown, and in you

A Daniel come to judgment! Yea, a Daniel!—
Oh, wise young judge, how I do honor thee!"

"Enough said; we will close the subject *sine die*, after that august prophecy, Birdie, and allow father to enlighten you in regard to the real cause of his excitement, which will certainly prove interesting to all concerned."

"Do let us hear, Mr. Herbert!—I am very impatient," exclaimed his wife, playfully.

"I am perfectly aware of that fact, my dear, and would have informed you some moments ago, but for Charlie's nonsense!" he remarked, smiling; then added:

"It is just twelve months since Mrs. Grant died; and to-day, according to her directions, the will was opened and read, and, to my great surprise, I find that she has appointed me one of her executors. Her estate is worth

over two hundred thousand dollars, and it will be quite a heavy charge."

"How singular! Why did she not appoint some of her relatives, or Mr. Harris, who has the management of the estate since her death?" asked Mrs. Herbert.

"Perhaps she had no relations to whom she cared to intrust her property, as none are mentioned in her will. And I understand that Mr. Grant's daughter died several years ago without issue."

"Indeed? who, then, is to inherit her property?"

"Dr. Clinton, and—Lula Graham!"

The last name was spoken in a low tone, and only reached the ear of Mrs. Herbert.

Immediately upon hearing Dr. Clinton's name, Lula clasped her hands, and exclaimed, with great joy:

"Oh! I am so glad, so glad! no one deserved it more!"

"Why, Birdie! has your sojourn with Mrs. Grant created in your heart a love of the filthy lucre, that you give such lively demonstrations of delight?" gravely asked Charlie, with a look of sorrowful surprise.

"No, indeed!—but I was just wishing, as you and Uncle Walter came in, that some kind fairy would reward Dr. Clinton for his many good deeds by presenting him with a beautiful home and countless thousands, so that Annie and he might be made supremely happy," was her reply.

"It is very commendable and characteristic of your noble and generous nature, thus ever to seek the good of others. But, my dear child, Dr. Clinton does not inherit the whole of Mrs. Grant's estate, but only one-half. The other portion she has bequeathed to one equally deserving."

"Indeed, uncle! To whom?"

"To our own precious darling, Lula Graham."

"To me! Uncle, surely you are jesting?"

"No, my child; I was never in more serious earnest."

"It appears incredible! What can I do with so much money?"

"Dear little Inexperience! buy toys and sugarplums for you and Charlie!" said that young gentleman, laughing, as he came forward—then bowing with great respect, he added:

"Let me be the first to offer my congratulation to Miss Graham, the heiress!"

"Oh, Charlie, do spare me, if you please!" she cried; then turning to Mr. Herbert, she said:

"Uncle, let Dr. Clinton have it *all*; he needs it! *I* do not. You are all so very kind, and love me so truly, that I am far happier for being dependent on your bounty!"

"My daughter, we shall never love you the less for having won this inheritance, as you have, by deeds of kindness and Christian love, which older heads might strive in vain to emulate."

Mr. Herbert placed his arm around the orphan girl, and kissed her brow; then left the room.

"May the possession of this wealth, as you have by it so much more power to do good, only incite you to greater acts of Christian charity; and to grow in those graces which have ever been the greatest ornaments of your mind and heart," said Mrs. Herbert, with solemn emphasis, as she folded the child of her adoption to her bosom.

"Oh, auntie! I feel that I am utterly unworthy of such kindness. If Mrs. Grant had lived, I might have given her some little proof of my gratitude; but I feared, and neglected her so long! Now she will never know how anxious I was to serve her." And tears fell rapidly from the eyes of the gentle girl.

Charlie looked toward the window to conceal the moisture in his own eyes; but his thoughts seemed suddenly turned into a very different channel as he caught sight, far

down upon the sloping lawn, through an opening in the foliage, of an approaching horseman.

A look of displeasure flitted over his handsome face, as he recognized the visitor; and, turning to Lula, with an effort at playfulness, he said:

"Fly away, Birdie, to your pretty bower; and remove those tears from your bright eyes! I see your devoted and gallant knight, Alfred Raymond, is seeking your gracious presence. His daily visits are beginning to appear rather ominous!"

The tone, and searching glance which he bestowed upon her, brought a deep and painful flush to Lula's cheek as she hastily left the room.

"My dear son, why is it that of late you manifest such dislike to Alfred Raymond?" said his mother, in a tone of grave earnestness, as she seated herself at his side. "Your father and I esteem him highly; and have always considered him your best friend until your return. Have you heard—do you know anything derogatory to his character that should warrant such coldness on your part?"

"No, mother; nothing! he is the soul of honor—an ornament to society—just and upright in all his dealings. He is worthy of the proudest lady in our land, and his name would confer honor and dignity on any."

Charlie spoke slowly and gravely; not as one youthful, joyous friend would eulogize another—rejoicing in the praises he was happy in bestowing—but as though this generous admission pained his own noble heart.

"Well, Charlie—still I do not comprehend; you are a perfect enigma?"

"Oh, mother! can you not understand it all? How can you be so blinded? Are you willing to resign Lula into his keeping forever?"

"Charles! what can you mean?" cried Mrs. Herbert, starting from her seat in great agitation.

"I mean that Raymond is desperately in love, and he will soon demand Lula's hand in marriage!"

"Oh, my son, surely you mistake!" exclaimed his mother in painful perplexity. "Why, she is a mere child, and has never dreamed of such a thing! Alfred is too honorable to take advantage of her youth and inexperience, or to abuse our confidence by making such a demand."

"Birdie is seventeen; and if I have not been misinformed, that was my mother's age when she married," said he, with a bow and faint effort at a smile. "I have no fears that Raymond will ever forfeit his claim to our friendship or the character of a gentleman. But he is handsome, brilliant, and clever; just the qualities to fascinate a girl of Lula's ardent temperament. She can appreciate his worth, and will probably reciprocate his attachment. This is the fear that tortures me, mother! and I cannot divest myself of it, and the painful thoughts which are consequent, even in his presence."

"Perhaps your suspicions are correct as far as Alfred is concerned; but I cannot think that she will ever regard him as a lover."

At this moment the door-bell rang, and Mr. Raymond was announced.

Lula had for some time past observed with pain Charlie's unnatural behavior toward Alfred, and now, as she detected something unusual in the manner of her aunt, she was pained and perplexed to interpret its significance.

"Surely," she thought, "something serious must have occurred (which they are concealing from me), to create this singular and marked change in their conduct. What can it be?"

This question annoyed the gentle girl extremely, and the thought that they did not confide in her, pained her sensitive nature and cast a restraining influence on her

own actions which did not escape the vigilant eyes of Mrs. Herbert and Charlie, and was attributed by the latter to a far different cause.

Mr. Herbert was the only member of the family who welcomed their guest with unalloyed pleasure, or who looked upon him without suspicion. He had always been a firm friend of Alfred's, and considered him a young man of no ordinary capacity; therefore, at his earnest solicitation, the visitor consented to dine, and spend the evening at Belvoir.

Late in the afternoon another guest was added to the hospitable circle. Miss Julia Stanly unexpectedly arrived.

After kissing Lula, and making every demonstration of delight at meeting her again, Julia said:

"I have come, darling, to spend the night with you, provided Mrs. Herbert has no objections. I have been so distracted to see you for the past week, that mother concluded rather than I should spoil my eyes forever with crying, she would let me come and persuade you to return with me to-morrow, as it had been such a long time since we had been favored with your charming presence. Where have you buried yourself for these ages past? Brother John says, that if you don't return with me, he will not be able to survive the terrible disappointment. He is wonderfully smitten with you, Lula. I never saw such a taking on!—but, dear me! Don't blush so, darling! I'll not betray your secret!"

"What secret is it, Miss Julia, that causes such bright roses to bloom on her cheeks?" asked Charlie, eagerly. He had overheard the last remark as she intended he should, although she lowered her voice, and pretended to whisper—a very stage aside.

"Charlie, you know very well I have no secrets," Lula hastily remarked in great confusion; then turning to Julia, she said:

"Excuse me for a moment, if you please; I will inform auntie of your arrival."

Instantaneously, as the lurid lightning from the midnight cloud illumines the darkened landscape, and for a brief space brings it in palpable distinctness to our startled gaze, the thought flashed with all the fiery intensity of her passionate nature upon the mind of Julia Stanly:

"This is my long sought opportunity! here is the moment for which I have toiled so unceasingly: *now* my meek innocence! Let *triumph* be the test of power!"

Wary, yet daring; cool, but surpassingly bold, this schemer from her cradle, she, who had been accustomed to plot for the pleasures of a day, stood blandly smiling as she mentally gauged each minute peculiarity of the ingenious natures before her, and knew that she could mould them like wax in her unscrupulous grasp, and saw each point of her game already won.

She could scarcely conceal her exultation and delight as these thoughts ranged themselves in her mind, but with admirable dissembling, she sank languidly into a low seat at Charlie's side a few moments after Lula had made her timid exit, and said, with playful and bewitching sweetness:

- "Now, Mr. Herbert! if you will promise me to keep this momentous secret inviolate, I will reward you by imparting it."

"I am grateful for your kindness, Miss Julia," Charlie answered, rather gravely; "but the affair seems to annoy Lula—and if she does not wish it known, I would prefer to remain in ignorance."

"You provoking creature! I think it best that you should know it *now*—as it may save you from embarrassment possibly in the future, or from making some *friendly* trespass on the rights of others! Lula Graham, I am certain, is mortgaged property. Did you not observe her em-

barrassment and crimson blush when I mentioned a certain name a few moments ago?"

Charlie was startled out of all complaisance,—he sprang up indignantly, his dark eyes flashing.

"Miss Stanly, is this *true*, or only a surmise?" he exclaimed, in a tone so loud and strange that it attracted the attention of Alfred Raymond, who was then in the midst of an absorbing political discussion with Mr. Herbert, on the opposite side of the room.

"The fiend is surely plotting some mischief again," thought that young gentleman, as he resumed the conversation.

"Mr. Herbert, this is but a gentle warning from one who holds your happiness—oh! how sacred!—and whose highest interest would be to serve *you*. Do you doubt my word?" She spoke in tones of mournful reproach, and her beautiful dark eyes were lifted in tender sadness to his face for one moment, and then cast timidly down, while a tear glistened on the heavily-fringed lid.

That glance—those words—touched young Herbert's heart as some strange spell. Like a proud war-steed suddenly pierced in some vital part, he sunk to his chair, trembling, powerless, utterly at the mercy of this beautiful schemer.

Julia Stanly deserves more than a passing notice at our hands. A considerable time has elapsed since we parted from her in the concert-room at Dr. Hall's, and this period has developed more fully that peculiar beauty which then attracted every observer. She is a brilliant brunette, with sparkling black eyes, ruby lips, and luxuriant hair of a midnight hue, cheeks on which the richest tinge of vermilion mingled with its delicate olive, and a form of exquisite proportion, all unite in rendering her a most striking and magnificent woman—one who might have been transported hither from the fervid clime of "Araby the blest."

She brought the art of dress to perfection. No artist ever studied more assiduously the effects of *chiaro'scuro* than did she to heighten the beauties and conceal the defects of her person. The most becoming colors were always selected and adjusted with perfect taste and harmony; nothing was ever seen in the *ensemble* of her toilet to shock the eye or offend the fancy of the most fastidious connoisseur. .

Her mirror had taught her how to smile and how to languish; before its unerring surface she had practiced bewitching graces, heart-piercing glances, and faultless attitudes. And when she condescended to level the whole battery of her charms against some unsuspecting victim, invulnerable must be the heart and stoical the nature which could resist the electric beams, or more dangerous still, the humid softness in the orbs of this star-eyed Georgian.

Her greatest ambition was to excite admiration and universal homage, the brilliant vista closing, at some "indefinite future time," with the ultimatum of a marriage, combining boundless wealth and an establishment of princely luxury. Consequently, in the fulfillment of two or three of these modest aims, she had directed her attention toward Charlie Herbert, as the one who came nearest, in her present field for generalship, to possessing all those essentials which she considered indispensable to her happiness. His wealth and position in society were powerful inducements, and these, linked to his handsome person, intelligence, and rare graces of mind and heart, rendered him a tempting prize in the estimation of the fair Julia.

But Charlie had not forgotten the prejudices which he had imbibed against her during the school days,—the never-to-be-forgotten examination at Dr. Hall's, and instinctively kept aloof from her influence.

As the full extent of her treachery was not then known

at Belvoir, her visits were tolerated, though she was by no means a favorite.

To insure the success of her plans, she had pretended a strong attachment to Lula; and since Charlie's return from the law school Julia was frequently an uninvited guest of the Herberts.

Lula's amiability was often sorely tested by these visits, for her unerring instinct, and a knowledge gained of the girl's character at school in former days, compelled her to doubt the sincerity of Julia's protestations of affection. She was proverbially cold and haughty to others; but of late she was all love and gentleness to the orphan, who, when thus compelled to endure the embrace and receive the kiss, was instinctively reminded of Judas and the divine query: "Friend, wherefore art thou come?"

Her present visit was the first that had not found Charlie with a pressing engagement, which required his immediate personal attention *from home*.

Her cunning device in regard to Lula's engagement had so coincided with his suspicions, that while it startled and unnerved his proud heart, it bound him with a mesmerizing influence to the side of the beautiful deceiver.

A short time previously, he had accidentally discovered Raymond's love for Lula—and then his own passion in all its strength, depth, and resistless power revealed itself—when another essayed to rob him of his idol!

Unconsciously, this love had grown with his growth, and strengthened with his strength, until his heart and soul seemed involved in the fearful struggle.

Knowing and acknowledging as his generous nature freely did, that Alfred was worthy of Lula in every way, Charlie's high sense of honor forbade any interference—though his own love, like a raging volcano, might overwhelm and destroy every dream of happiness—nay, his very hopes of peace! Had he been more calm—had reason

held her wonted sway in that now tumultuous realm of thought, her dauntless powers would have pierced the malignant tissue of falsehood by which she was surrounded and caused it to melt into air.

But the cause of his sorrow wrought against him; and disdaining to pry into the affairs of those, however dear, who seemed to withhold their confidence, he generously forbore, and, like the unhappy, deluded wretch, who seeks to drown his misery at the fountain of Bacchus, he sought in the depths of Julia's bewildering eyes some Lethean balm to soothe his heart in its corroding anguish.

Well did Julia play her part; not for one moment did she forget herself or the object she had in view. This, the first act in this drama of deception, had been prepared with great skill, and not Mrs. Siddons, in her palmyest days, could have fascinated an audience more completely than did Julia Stanly her solitary devotee, on this eventful evening.

Finally—and with a touch of consummate skill—she spoke of herself, with no sweet sister's cherishing affection—without a bosom friend among her sex.

"The world calls me proud and haughty; but oh, it does not know how my heart yearns for love and sympathy! I would freely sacrifice wealth and all its benefits, for the fond and pure devotion of one true heart. I would be content if Lula returned more fully my sincere affection to her; but I have tried in vain to win her to forget and forgive. I fear she remembers too seriously some of our childish disagreements, ever to reciprocate my affection with warmth. If humility and remorse could atone for the follies of the past, or bitter tears through sleepless nights could blot out its painful memory, then do I deserve absolution and a place in her heart!"

She spoke so humbly!—and her dark eyes flashed in

their crystal depths, while drops like melted diamonds sparkled on the silken lashes.

The artful spider is weaving imperceptibly the gossamer web around her unconscious victim; and time must show whether the wisdom and prudence of Charlie Herbert can resist the cunning wiles of the beautiful enchantress.

CHAPTER XIII.

I know a maiden fair to see;
 Take care!
 She can both false and friendly be;—
 Beware! Beware!
 Trust her not,
 She is fooling thee.

THE sweet Southern breeze, laden with the exquisite perfume of the *olea fragrans*, floated softly over the beautiful grounds at Belvoir, as figures were seen quietly strolling through the winding walks,—occasionally hidden from view by the drooping boughs of the wild olive-trees, whose varnished leaves glistened with silvery sheen as they reflected the moon's mellow radiance.

Gay voices, rippling laughter, and "snatches of sweet song," enlivened the evening stillness, as the youthful promenaders lingered on the fairy scene. At length one couple fell behind the other, loitered apart; and finally entered a pavilion belonging to the grounds, beneath the sequestered shadow of a group of grand old oaks. The graceful architecture of this structure seemed fashioned from some oriental temple, with its octagonal form, airy columns, and slender minaret, towering high above the pagoda roof. In the enchanting hour of radiant moonlight, we might almost fancy some magician's hand had transported hither a miniature mosque from the "Gem of the Orient" where the Golden Horn winds through the city, and terminates in the Valley of "Sweet Waters." From the encircling galleries, one almost listened for the *muezzin*—shouting his "Mashallah! Mashallah!" No

devout Mussulman ever worshiped his God more fervently than did Alfred Raymond the lovely girl who sat beside him.

With trembling eagerness, he whispered into the ear of the astonished orphan girl the history of his great love, as though life itself depended on the issue.

She knew, from the quivering lips, from the icy clasp of his hand, and the varying color on his cheek, that every word he uttered came from his heart, in the depths of its first and passionate love.

When the full moon, which for a moment had veiled its radiance in a silver mist, shone forth again in its glorious splendor, the sweet face of Lula Graham was bathed in tears.

"Oh, Alfred," she exclaimed, "I do not merit such love as this—I am unworthy to fill the place you have given me in your noble heart! Yet I cannot endure the thought that you should cast me entirely off, but as a brother would cherish a sister, let me still claim a place in your regard. Do not seek a nearer tie! and do not waste a sigh of regret on one so greatly your inferior!" She paused briefly; then continued:

"Another and a far worthier heart will soon beat for you, and your last love will be happier than the first."

"Lula! I have been too abrupt—I see I have startled you by this rash avowal—wait! You are not now prepared to answer me. And, ah! deliberate, earnestly, before you doom me to life-long misery! Mine is no wayward fancy! Assumed to-day, and thrown aside to-morrow. Heaven is my witness that never since I first met you as a little child, has a day or hour passed that this love did not reign paramount in my heart. Your eyes like load-stars have guided me through the perilous journey of youth; the truth and purity that shone from them have restrained me when temptation and danger threatened to blight the

hopes of a sainted mother for her only child. *Your* influence, Lula, has caused me to be esteemed, and fitted me to occupy an honorable position among my fellow-men. Jacob never toiled so faithfully for Rachel as I have to become worthy of you. Let me go on toiling and hoping, but, oh! my darling! do not doom me to despair. If you but wish, I will surmount every difficulty—climb to the loftiest height in the temple of fame, that I may place you above the proudest in the land. All—everything—that human power can do to promote your happiness, I will do, if you will but smile upon my efforts, and your love is given to cheer and strengthen me through life.”

He paused; and with suspended breath awaited the doubtful sentence.

“Oh, Alfred! I wish that you had spared me this bitter trial! Let a sister’s constant unselfish love suffice. I cannot think of you otherwise than as the dearest and best of brothers; my heart claimed you as such when we first met as orphans, and never since that hour have I felt destitute of a brother’s care and protection. Do not destroy this sweet illusion! strive to forget what you have said! and let us maintain the same happy relationship which has ever existed between us. In after-years, when you meet with one more worthy of your noble heart, you will thank me for this momentary disappointment, of which it pains me far more to cause you the suffering than you can ever know.”

As she concluded, her soft eyes, with the truthful, earnest soul beaming through them, sought the face of her discarded lover:

For an instant Raymond gazed with speechless agony into those pleading eyes; then bowed his head upon the railing, as if to still the pangs of his bleeding heart. The cherished hopes of years were suddenly blasted, “his idol had vanished, his earth-star fled.”

As one amid some fairy vision is rudely awakened to find himself alone upon the billows of a raging sea, without one ray of hope, he yielded to his fate in mute despair. So long and so motionless did he remain in this attitude of despondent grief, that the silence became insupportable, and each moment was adding to the pain and terror of Lula. She softly murmured his name—but he did not respond. Again she spoke in trembling tones:

“Alfred, dear Alfred! will you not speak, and say that you forgive me for causing you this distress? I might possibly have prevented it had I suspected your intentions; but indeed I did not until this evening imagine that you would ever honor me so highly! Speak, dear Alfred, say that you will not refuse me a sister’s place in your noble and generous heart?”

After a long interval he raised his pale, haggard face; then seizing one of her hands, pressed it frantically to his lips, and in a husky, unnatural voice said:

“Lula, my darling! pardon me for presuming in my mad folly to occupy a nearer and dearer place in your affections than the one you offer! I will strive to conquer this hopeless love—and may God help me to endure the painful ordeal, and in boundless mercy forgive me, that I have worshiped the creature more than the Creator. I must seek in some distant scene to forget the delightful visions which have made a paradise of my Southern home; now its shining portals seem closed against me forever! the home that knew me shall know me no more, until I can return and find in my heart for you only the calm, disinterested love of a brother. I know too well your gentle, truthful heart to doubt now the nature of your affection for me. I know you will never be indifferent to my welfare, and will pray that peace and happiness may dwell again in this crushed and bleeding heart.” Then rising, he concluded:

"Until your petition is granted, beloved one, farewell! My darling, my angel, my lost one, farewell!"

He stood for an instant trembling in every nerve, then convulsively folded the frightened girl in his arms, and kissing her again and again, he released her and rushed from the pavilion.

Charlie and Julia had been for some time searching for the fugitives, and at last, attracted by the sound of voices, had approached their retreat—when suddenly, through a broad opening in the shrubbery, Charlie Herbert witnessed the tender embrace and passionate farewell.

With a heart bounding wildly in its conflicting emotions, he stood for one instant transfixed—spell-bound—then hurried his companion to a distant portion of the grounds, just before Raymond had made his hurried exit.

Lula escaped unseen into the house, and rushing into Mrs. Herbert's presence, threw her arms around her neck, and with her throbbing head pillowed upon the bosom of that dear friend, who had so often soothed her childish sorrows, she wept as if her heart would break.

Mrs. Herbert was filled with alarm at this singular outburst of feeling, and endeavored by gentle caresses and affectionate entreaty to find some clew to her distress. But the convulsive sobs which threatened to rend the troubled breast were her only response.

At last, after many fruitless attempts to suppress her tears, she said:

"Oh, auntie! I am so unhappy! Alfred has gone—gone perhaps never to return! Hide me from Charlie and Julia, for indeed I cannot brook their looks of wonder and inquiry, should they witness my unconquerable distress to-night; besides, my head is aching dreadfully."

Mrs. Herbert saw that this was all true, and after accompanying the poor girl to her chamber, she left her for

a few moments in order to make the necessary apology to her guest.

On entering the parlor, she found Julia standing beneath the full blaze of the chandelier, radiant with beauty and animation, while she conversed with all her matchless powers of brilliancy and fascination.

Charlie stood near, apparently entranced, gazing on the bewildering creature, as would a connoisseur on the entrancing creation of some painter's or sculptor's dream.

He seemed unconscious of the words that fell from her coral lips, or indeed of aught else save the presence of the syren.

Mrs. Herbert hastened to inform them that Lula was suffering intensely with headache, and was unable to appear again in the parlor during the evening.

"Why, mother, this is a very unexpected announcement! She appeared quite well after tea. Where is Alfred?" eagerly demanded Charlie.

"Alfred left before you returned to the house, my son," was the gentle reply; then turning to her guest, Mrs. Herbert said:

"Lula requires my attention, I regret exceedingly to be compelled to leave you, but hope you will pardon my detention."

"Certainly; but dear Mrs. Herbert, do let me go to my sweet friend! mother says I am an excellent nurse, do let me go, for I shall be miserable until I know that she is relieved."

"Thank you, but I must decline your offer, as I shall remain with her," was the unmoved reply; then Mrs. Herbert added:

"Lizzie is in the vestibule and will attend you to your apartment whenever you wish to retire."

"Oh! do let us remain here awhile, and then you can send word how the poor darling is; for I shall not be able

to sleep for an instant unless I hear that she is at rest," was the artful rejoinder.

This conversation had partially restored Charlie from his bewilderment. Notwithstanding Julia's dazzling charms, he could not be indifferent to Lula for one moment when he knew that she was suffering; he sighed to be alone that he might commune with his own heart and still its conflicting emotions. Julia heard that sigh, and believing it to be the feeble cry of an aching heart burdened with unrequited love, she recklessly resolved to sunder another link in the chain that bound him to her rival.

With tenderest pity she said:

"Poor dear Lula! how gladly would I share her suffering if it were possible!" then after an interval she continued in tones of dulcet gentleness:

"Do you know, Mr. Herbert, that until the assertion was positively denied by herself, I was convinced that you were devotedly attached to each other, and" (with the daintiest hesitation and timidity) "probably engaged? I have frequently bantered Lula on this subject, and once asked her how it was *possible* for her to have resisted the temptation of falling in love with one whom *I* considered so much superior to other gentlemen of our acquaintance? And the artless girl replied that 'Charlie was a dear, good brother, but *much* too frivolous for a lifetime companion!' I exclaimed against such puritanical taste, in one so young particularly, and replied that

A little nonsense now and then,
Was relished by the wisest men."

"I thank you, Miss Julia, for your kind defense, and for enlightening me in regard to the true nature of her esteem! Had I been apprised of it at an earlier day, perhaps I might have been more successful in conforming to her fas-

tidious ideas of manly perfection !” he said in an agitated voice, and making a sad attempt to smile.

“Lula is a dear, affectionate creature, but somewhat peculiar,” said Miss Julia, patronizingly. “I rather think she admires the proud and stately manner of Mr. Raymond. *Others* think very differently of you, Mr. Herbert !” and her starry eyes were lifted timidly to his face.

“You have succeeded admirably in your attempts to soothe my wounded vanity, Miss Julia, and I shall endeavor to merit the good opinion, in future, with which you are so kind as to favor me,” he replied, with a great effort to appear calm and indifferent.

Alas, poor Charlie ! that you should suffer this cunning sorceress to poison your heart against the gentle Lula, whose truth and purity, through childhood and youth, you deemed almost rivaling the angels in heaven.

But could he have been deceived, possibly? (and he was startled at the import of these thoughts). Had not his excessive love blinded him to defects which were now made so glaring by the disinterested and timely interference of Julia? had she not gently warned him that the object of his affection was the betrothed of another? and was not this assertion proven beyond a doubt? Had not his own eyes witnessed Raymond’s passionate adieu, which none but an accepted lover would have dared to bestow? That instant’s glance toward the pavilion had stamped upon his memory a scene which had destroyed his last hope,—which would ever rise, specter-like, between him and happiness, changing the sweet spring-time of anticipation to the winter of despair.

Julia’s humble confession and evident remorse for her girlish indiscretions appealed strongly to his generous heart, and prepared him to be sacrificed, a ready victim to her unscrupulous vanity and ambition.

At this moment the bewildering maze of our hero’s con-

templations was broken by the entrance of Lizzie, the attendant, who said: -

"Miss Stanly, as it is getting quite late, mistress thinks perhaps you would like to retire."

This was a hint that could not possibly be misunderstood, so throwing as much tenderness into her manner as the occasion permitted, she bade Charlie an elaborate "Good night," and followed the servant from the room.

When about to ascend the stairs, she discovered suddenly that something had been forgotten, and requested Lizzie to wait there until she could return for the missing article.

When she re-entered the parlor, Charlie was leaning his head on his arm, which rested upon the mantle, both attitude and expression indicative of the deepest despondency; and gliding to his side, she said, in accents of sweetest tenderness:

"Mr. Herbert, it is beyond measure distressing to me to see you thus dejected. What can I do to charm away the gloom? Let me assure you that there is ONE warm and faithful heart that can appreciate you!"

"Thank you, thank you, dear Miss Stanly!" was the reply, in agitated tones, as he turned—and her brilliant beauty again met his dazzled eyes. And then—poor deluded Charlie grasped her jeweled hand and pressed it to his lips.

A triumphant smile illumined her face, as she returned the warm pressure of his hand. Then, after another whispered "Good night and happy dreams!" she glided from his sight.

She ascended the broad stairs and crossed the hall, the floor of which was a mosaic-work of polished wood, and entered the elegant apartment prepared for her; then casting her eyes around with a satisfied air, she sank into a luxurious arm-chair before the mirror, and commenced to

release from their confinement the lustrous black locks, while Lizzie adjusted the rich lace curtains, which fell in graceful folds to the floor.

"Can I assist you, Miss Stanly?" said the well-trained servant, who had previously arranged the room, and prepared everything with reference to the comfort of the guest.

"No, I thank you! I will not detain you. However, tell me about Lula before you go?"

"Mistress said that she was still suffering with her head, ma'am."

"You all seem to be very fond of Miss Lula?" was the rejoinder.

"Oh yes, ma'am! everybody loves her, they can't help it—she is so kind and good! Why, ma'am, the old folks down at the plantation says that when she goes into their houses, they feel like falling down to worship her; that 'tis the presence of an angel!"

"I don't wonder that you should love her, indeed. She is a dear, sweet creature, and I hope she will be quite well by morning. Good night, Lizzie!"

As the girl left the room and closed the door, a smile of supreme contempt curled the lips of the proud beauty, and she thus gave vent to her thoughts:

"An angel, forsooth! Well, when I am *Mrs. Charles Herbert*—whom I intend to be very soon—this *angel* will be shorn of her wings, I fancy, and ejected from this paradise! A pretty scene, truly, she has gotten up here to-night, only because she was vexed at Charlie's devotion to me. This is not the first time I have defeated her plans; and if I mistake not, she will have many a heartache, as well as headache, ere we arrive at a final settlement. Her sweet baby face is no match for Julia Stanly's regal beauty; these starlit eyes have done me good service to-night! And Master Charlie has avoided me, heretofore, to no purpose." She stood gazing admiringly into the mirror, toying

with the night-like hair, which fell in shining waves far below her girdle; then continued her soliloquy:

"What matter is it to me, if *Madame la Mère* does conduct herself toward me like an imperial iceberg? A little more tact, a little more generalship, will thaw *her* frigidity; for Charlie is her darling, and then I will wield the scepter in my own fair hands. Then this unfledged foundling may say:

Farewell happy fields! .
Where joy forever dwells,

and gladly seek refuge with Alfred Raymond, or some other love-sick swain—I care not who or where, while she sighs to leave *the* paradise,

—these happy walks and shades,
Fit haunt of gods;

where she fondly hoped to spend her days in luxury and elegance, which would have contented Cleopatra or the Queen of Sheba!

"But I must not dim the brightness of these eyes, nor pale the roses on these cheeks, by keeping this midnight vigil before the mirror; so I will to bed and dream of Charlie and his handsome—*fortune!*

"Another day at Belvoir, and *my* fortune is made!"

* * * * *

When Mrs. Herbert returned to Lula's chamber, she found the poor girl had wept herself really ill, and was resting her head upon a table, while her hands tightly pressed the throbbing temples. Notwithstanding Mrs. Herbert's anxiety in regard to this distress, she acted with her usual discretion and forbearance, and made no further inquiry in relation to its cause.

She raised the drooping head and kissed the heated brow; then gently brushing back the soft hair, said:

"My darling, you must let me prescribe for this dreadful pain. You will be much more comfortable in a recumbent position, and then a few cold applications will soon drive the heat from your head."

Lula submitted passively to the gentle hands which assisted in disrobing her, and was soon resting on the luxurious couch while Mrs. Herbert bathed her burning forehead. At last the tears ceased to flow, and the look of pain left her lovely face. The kind nurse saturated a napkin with iced water, and placed it softly over the brow and closed eyes; then taking the Bible from its stand, she read a selection from its sacred page, and, kneeling, she prayed that divine assistance might be vouchsafed the sufferer to support her in every trial, that it might guide her in difficulties and sustain her in sorrow,—and commended her to the care and protection of her Heavenly Father and his beloved Son.

When the prayer was ended, Lula raised her tearful eyes, and throwing her arms affectionately around Mrs. Herbert's neck, said:

"Dear auntie, I feel so much better! You are so patient with my weakness, so lenient toward my faults—never chiding, but always so gentle and affectionate. How can I ever repay your kindness?"

"By striving always to maintain the same loving, unselfish soul, the same pure and guileless motives, which have endeared you to every heart, my darling!"

"My dear auntie! you all think far better of me than I deserve. You do not know how many sinful, wicked thoughts find entrance to my heart! I often despair of conquering them, for their name is legion. And it pains me to think that I am acting a falsehood by passing for more than my real worth.

"But, ah! my suffering to-night should go far to subdue any feeling of gratified vanity I may have had at possessing

the good opinion of others who persist in endowing me with imaginary qualities to which I have no right or title. Even Alfred, who is so good and noble, was laboring under the same delusion, when he offered me his hand and heart, asking me to guide him through life, and ascribing to me his success and high position in society.

"Auntie! I shall never, never forget his ghastly face and look of intense anguish when I refused that kind and generous heart."

A remembrance of the trying scene completely unnerved her, and again she wept bitterly.

When she was sufficiently composed to relate the details of her interview with Alfred Raymond, Mrs. Herbert could not wonder at the effect produced upon the sensitive and affectionate girl.

Although it was painful in the extreme,—nay, even alarming to contemplate the serious consequences which might ensue to the character of Alfred from this rejection, yet Mrs. Herbert could not but feel a weight lifted from her heart, as a sigh of relief escaped her, to know that her darling was still her own; and for the present, at least, safe from the influence of a handsome, fascinating lover.

Mrs. Herbert found it necessary to administer an opiate before the troubled heart would still its tumultuous throbbing, or the quivering nerves calm themselves in sleep.

CHAPTER XIV.

What is a fair or noble face
If the mind ignoble be?
What though beauty, in each grace,
May her own resemblance see!
Eyes may catch from heaven their spell,
Lips the ruby's light recall;
In the Home for love to dwell
One good feeling's worth them all.

THE tinkling of the silver breakfast-bell summoned the party to the table, where the aromatic fumes of Mocha coffee from the hissing urn, the light steaming rolls and muffins, the tender steaks and plump broiled chickens, swimming in their rich sauces, besides various other concomitants, were mingled in generous profusion, the sight of which was enough to fill an epicure with delight, and compel an anchorite to forswear his cell. It was a bright, cheerful-looking room, with its glittering array of china, silver, and glass, notwithstanding that without, the rain pattered against the windows and flowed in crystal streams down the plate-glass, while dark leaden clouds veiled the sky.

Lula's absence was dwelt upon and regretted in terms of tenderest hyperbole by the fair Julia, who, glancing through the window at the increasing rain, said:

"I doubly regret that she should be forced to play the rôle of invalid to-day; for, dear Mrs. Herbert, judging from external appearances, I shall be obliged to trespass still longer on your delightful hospitality, as mamma will consider the day too inclement to send out for me."

"It certainly is; and furthermore, we never allow a

guest to leave our house when the weather is so unpropitious," was the courteous reply.

"We are threatened with imprisonment for the day," said Mr. Herbert; "but with the assistance of music and books you may probably escape a dangerous attack of *ennui*, that dreary but fashionable malady."

"As I am not often annoyed by such visitants, I think it probable I shall escape entirely to-day, as my captivity will be shared by such unexceptionable company as Mr. Herbert and family."

"Thank you, Miss Julia! You are recognized as a lady of superior taste, therefore we must value your graceful compliment accordingly. I shall not doubt your capacity for endurance after that pretty speech."

Charlie sat moodily stirring his coffee, without any apparent desire to participate in the luxuries of the table or to join in the conversation, when he was aroused by his father, who said:

"My son, have you read that new romance, by a country-woman of ours, which has caused a *furore* throughout the country?"

"Yes, father, and its perusal has given me great pleasure," replied the young man, his animation, in a measure, returning with this genial theme. "It is the effusion of a noble-hearted woman—one who has passed through some fiery ordeal and come forth refined as pure gold. The language is chaste and elegant, beautiful in its simplicity, without bombast or pedantry, yet charming in its practical reasoning. You feel, while reading it, that you are in the presence of one whom to know would be to love. None could read that book without desiring to become a better man or woman. I am sure the writer had some nobler object in view than a mere desire for empty fame when she launched her lone bark upon the uncertain waves, for faith and hope are inscribed upon the pennon at its mast,

and appeal irresistibly to the reader's heart. Unconsciously the better feelings of our nature are brought into play, while the involuntary promptings of your heart compel you to offer a helping hand, and bid her 'God speed' in her noble work."

"I am truly rejoiced to hear you speak so highly of this work, for if young people must indulge in light literature, let it be something which will tend to elevate their thoughts, refine their natures, and call forth the ennobling qualities of their hearts."

"By whom was this book written?" asked Mrs. Herbert.

"The publishers have baffled every attempt of the curious to discover the name of the fair authoress, saying it was her particular desire to remain *incognito*. Suspicion, however, rests strongly on a young friend of ours."

"Indeed! I cannot imagine any young friend of ours who could have been thus successful in so arduous an enterprise, nor one whose talents would warrant my attributing to her the authorship of a work which has been such a decided success."

"Yes, mother! you do know one who is capable of doing all this—nay, who has done it. But her modest, unassuming grace, her refined taste in manner and appearance, have shielded her from that odious *sobriquet, bas bleu*,—a term derisively applied to all ladies who have any literary proclivities. But as this fair authoress shrinks from public gaze, we will respect her wishes, and trespass no further upon her secret."

"My son, I am completely mystified! You have almost led me to think that it was written by Lula or Annie, so enthusiastic are your encomiums—but in either case it seems impossible."

"Or perchance Miss Julia has concluded to come to the rescue of Southern literature," said Mr. Herbert, gallantly,

bowing to his fair guest; "and will lend her redoubtable aid to release us from the cruel animadversions so frequently cast upon us by the Northern press."

"Indeed, no! I am far too shrinking and timorous to undertake such a crusade,—it is not *my* sphere. The brightest vision of my ambition is not to stand in the world's broad glare a second 'Corinne,' but to dwell simply a modest priestess at the shrine of home; my chosen pleasure, the keeping ever pure and bright its sacred altar-fires, to make that home the 'dearest spot of earth,' by cultivating such graces and accomplishments as will add to the comfort and happiness of its treasured circle."

The beaming look of admiration which Charlie cast upon the beautiful speaker—more eloquent than words—showed how cordially he approved her truly feminine sentiment. And although his parents, from a more intimate knowledge of her character, might possibly have questioned the genuineness of these charming assertions, they were too thoroughly well-bred to manifest aught save the most unhesitating faith in them. Mr. Herbert remarked:

"That speech is worthy of Lucretia! Such aims are highly commendable, and deserve the respect and admiration of every sensible person. One might almost suppose, Miss Stanly, that you had been tutored by a Roman matron, to have thus imbibed such rigid ideas of woman's true vocation, and I doubt not you have uttered the heartfelt sentiments of the majority of Southern ladies. Still, the iron hand of circumstance sometimes converts, with its stern touch, this beautiful trait of timid worth into the most unhesitating and self-forgetful courage. Necessity sometimes compels a woman to assume a career repugnant and distasteful to her exalted ideas of shrinking delicacy, in order to obtain the 'mere material things' requisite to build up that sweet shrine of home to which you pay so

graceful a tribute, and which is so dear to every true heart; or perhaps to supply the helpless and unfortunate belonging to its circle with the very staff of life. Should such duties accrue, I know of no class, in my widely-extended field of observation, who are more capable or more willing to make this peculiar sacrifice than the educated women of the South."

"While I extol Miss Stanly's admirable sentiments, I must concur with you, father, in believing it obligatory upon women sometimes to sacrifice their inclination in this peculiarity to duty. The book which we were just discussing, I consider an illustration of this principle. I insist that it was penned by some devoted, unselfish wife, sister, or mother, in behalf of loved ones whom she is striving to exalt in the social scale, or to shield from the withering touch of want or care."

"If such be the case, it is the duty of every Christian to assist and encourage her in the noble work. To show my own appreciation of her praiseworthy effort, I will order immediately a dozen copies of the book for distribution among our friends."

"Thank you, father, for this evidence of your reliance on my judgment. I think after a careful perusal of the work you will still acknowledge yourself her debtor."

After the conclusion of the meal, Mr. Herbert invited Julia into the library to inspect some foreign engravings which he had recently received. Charlie was about to follow, when a word from his mother caused him to resume his chair. She then asked:

"By whom was that book written, my son?"

"If you will read it, mother, there will be no necessity for me to inform you! Instinctively you will be convinced that it is the work of Annie Sunderland."

"May Heaven bless her noble heart!" ejaculated Mrs. Herbert, her eyes filling with tears at the thought of the

unselfish spirit of the gentle, loving heart, which could thus nerve itself with Spartan strength, and battle alone with the world to serve her orphan brother.

She then added, with much feeling:

"Charlie, the commendation which you bestowed so lavishly on that book, just now, I thought too extravagant; but if Annie is the authoress, your praise was extremely meager."

"It was indeed; particularly when we consider the motive she had in view."

"I know that it is some noble, generous impulse, induced by her desire to promote the interest of her brother, but I cannot realize its nature, since her previous exertions have already placed him in a lucrative situation."

"You know his scholastic duties were suspended for want of funds, and refusing assistance from her friends, she placed him in Mr. Harding's mercantile establishment. Yesterday I heard that gentleman say, he wished to employ another clerk, as Harry Sunderland would leave at an early day to commence his collegiate course."

"Then it is to Annie alone that he is indebted for the privilege of those advantages? May God reward her labors! 'Many daughters have done wisely, but thou excellest them all.'"

They arose from the table, and were leaving the room, when a heavy sigh from Charlie arrested his mother's attention.

"Charlie, what is the meaning of that sigh? Are you still jealous of Raymond?" she smilingly asked.

"No, mother, not jealous; but I am miserable! Deceived, betrayed, by one who wears the semblance of an angel!" he replied in accents of bitter sadness.

"My son, appearances are often deceptive. Be sure that you do not condemn a friend unheard, or give credence to the voice of detraction, particularly if it comes to

you through a medium whose honesty of purpose you have ever had cause to doubt."

"Mother, I have seen enough to convince me that the warning which I received from a disinterested person was given solely through motives of friendship to me, and without any desire to traduce the character of others. Although thus forewarned, I was utterly unprepared for the cruel blow; it came with fatal force, and left my wretched heart well-nigh broken. Oh, mother! I do not hesitate to tell you how helpless and faint I was with the evidence of this terrible treachery before me! And the gentle, delicate sympathy of Julia Stanly fell like soothing balm upon my wounded spirit!" Then he added:

"Perhaps through her instrumentality the wound may heal, but the scar will ever remain to remind me of the subtle blow dealt by an enemy under friendship's smiling mask."

"Charlie! you are certainly *non compos mentis*. I feel provoked beyond endurance at this folly. Surely you are not silly enough to be deluded by the arts and blandishments of a heartless girl, and one too whose character is so well understood?"

"Mother, how can you repeat this? She has been basely traduced."

"My son, beware of the syren's protean wiles! They are

—mere decoys

Trepanning seamen with their tuneful voice,

and their machinations are always very nicely adapted to the temper and inclination of the victim. No acquaintance of this beautiful girl can prove by word, deed, or action, that she is otherwise than false, designing, and selfish!"

"Mother, I think you are cruelly prejudiced; characters often change materially; some degenerate, but hers has perfected nobly. I must say, however, that she has never

received justice in *this* house. All I ask, in conclusion, is that you observe her impartially, and you will find her not only worthy of my admiration, but of yours also."

"Charlie, surely you have not arrived at man's estate without learning to distinguish pure gold from its counterfeit, although the worthless metal may assume for a time the brilliancy of the genuine! I had given you credit for more discrimination. At a proper time and place, I will explain a certain *affaire d'amour*, which may probably change the tenor of your meditations. In the mean time go and ask the fair enchantress to sing for you that celebrated little ballad, 'The Spider and the Fly,' " she laughingly concluded as the servant entered to remove the breakfast service.

Mrs. Herbert, with a singular feeling of depression, ascended the stairs, and directed her steps toward Lula's chamber. Charlie entered the parlor, and seating himself at a table, he turned listlessly the leaves of an illustrated volume of Shakspeare.

Soon approaching footsteps were heard, and then Mr. Herbert's voice, saying:

"Walk into the parlor, Miss Stanly; I think you will find Mrs. Herbert already there, so I shall not hesitate to leave you in her care while I look over the morning papers; be sure I will be able to render a faithful chronicle of marriages and deaths, or other items of gossip for your especial delectation, when I return to the parlor."

Julia was agreeably surprised at finding Charlie alone. By his invitation she seated herself at his side, Shakspeare was again resorted to, and Charlie descanted eloquently of the immortal bard

On whose forehead climb
The crowns of the world!

striving to rouse, and interest himself with "a feast of

reason" spread by his fair enslaver; hoping thereby to test the power of her colloquial gifts, and prove that her mind was as lovely as her person.

But he was destined to be baffled. Julia Stanly was far too great an adept in the art of concealing her deficiencies to be thus unwarily decoyed into a field so open, where the very first manœuvres would have resulted in her utter discomfiture.

Shakspeare she knew had written plays or poems of some kind, but whether he was the author of *Hudibras* or the *Lady of Lyons*, a "Divine Comedy," or *Gertrude of Wyoming*, she could not possibly have told.

Therefore assuming an air of utter dejection, she suddenly appeared like a fair lily drooping after a storm; with her eyes cast down, her white hands clasped, she continued to gaze abstractedly on the carpet. So very miserable and woe-begone was her appearance, that Charlie's compassionate heart was moved to a painful degree.

He closed the book hastily, but the movement did not arouse her, just then a tear-drop glistened and lingered upon the jetty lashes; she raised her head and met his tender, inquiring glance.

Poor Charlie! have you forgotten the fifth commandment and its wholesome inculcations? that willful disobedience certainly will bring punishment?

And why not obey literally your anxious mother's injunctions and bid the charmer sing the "Spider and the Fly?" for mentally she breathes the witching lay. We must not anticipate, but will content ourselves with watching the artful girl as she spreads her net and softly says:

"Mr. Herbert, will you kindly pardon my inattention? I am so deeply mortified when I review my conduct toward you last evening, and think of the illiberal construction you may place upon it, that I can think of nothing else, until I offer an apology and receive forgiveness. I

fear you think me sadly deficient in maidenly reserve, and although I am troubled at the idea of your thinking lightly of me, I can make but one excuse, truthfully; which is, that I was irresistibly attracted toward you, and followed the warm and untutored impulse of my heart in offering sympathy unsought."

Her large lustrous eyes, melting with tenderness, and filled with mystic power, were lifted beseechingly to his face.

"Dear Miss Stanly! You deeply pain me by this cruel imputation. Do you suppose the poor wretch who was suffering agony by the wayside, could have repulsed or doubted the intentions of the good Samaritan who came with wine and oil to heal the bleeding wounds? No, no! you are unjust to doubt my gratitude. Dear Julia, how can I repay such disinterested kindness?"

He pressed the jeweled hand which lay *carelessly* upon the table at his side.

"By numbering me as one of your truest and best friends!" she exclaimed, with—but, alas! the look of bewitching tenderness, the tones of intense pathos, were interrupted by the inopportune entrance of Mrs. Herbert.

An hour or two later, Mrs. Herbert accompanied her guest into Lula's apartment, and, after some pleasant conversation on general topics, she proposed that the invalid should dress, and return with them to the parlor. Her charge timidly remonstrated, but Mrs. Herbert insisted that it would make her feel better, and more cheerful, and finally left the room, saying:

"I shall expect you down in a few moments—do not disappoint me, darling."

Lula smiled, faintly, a reluctant assent, as the kind lady was closing the door. Had the orphan consulted her inclinations, she would have declined promptly; but as her actions had ever been controlled by the wishes of her aunt,

she abandoned the selfish desire to remain in solitude, and arose to prepare her toilet.

After Julia had exhausted her stock of news and gossip, she asked, abruptly:

"Lula, do you intend to marry Alfred Raymond?"

"Why, no, certainly not!" stammered the poor girl, changing color, and trembling with emotion.

"Well, I must say, you are hard to please; any other girl would have accepted him at a moment's warning. If I were in your place, I would marry him, just to stop people's mouths."

"I can't imagine any one who is at all concerned in the matter. If you have heard anything unpleasant about me, please don't mention it now, for I feel so weak from that attack of headache, that an unkind word or harsh remark would completely prostrate me."

"The dear little head,—does it ache still? then let me arrange your hair; the exertion would be too much for you."

Julia arose, and stood behind Lula's chair; then lifting the rich soft hair that had fallen around the sweet pale face and graceful form, she remarked:

"What beautiful hair you have! it feels like a mass of soft chenille. I'm sorry that my careless speech should agitate you so much, but still, as your friend, I think it's my duty to let you know that the gossiping world says you will not marry Raymond, brother John, or any one else, because you wish to become Mrs. Charlie Herbert."

She fixed her eyes on the mirror before them, to note the effect of her words, and saw the crimson flush mount with fearful rapidity to the pale face of her companion.

In an instant Lula sprang from her seat, and, with flashing eyes, confronted the artful girl.

"Julia Stanly! how dare you insult me by such cruel insinuations? Would you drive me mad, and force me to

leave the house that has sheltered my helpless childhood?" she cried, indignantly, then burst into tears.

"Pshaw, child! what need you care, if there is no truth in the silly gossip?" was the careless rejoinder.

"You are right. I will not care; for my conscience acquits me of any such design," and she forced back the tears, as she continued her preparation.

Although Lula struggled hard to conceal her agitation, Julia saw, with secret satisfaction, that her words had produced the desired effect, and then said:

"I will go and smooth my own disheveled locks before going down stairs," and left the room.

Presently a rap at the door, followed by a feeble "come in" from Lula, caused Mr. Herbert to enter the room.

"How is my dear child?" then going up and kissing her, he put his arm around her, and looked anxiously into her troubled face.

"I am almost well, dear uncle, and am going down stairs," she replied, in a choking voice.

"Indeed! then you deceive your looks, my darling; for your hands are as cold as ice, and you are quivering like an aspen leaf."

"I have heard it said that cold hands indicate a warm heart," she replied, with a sickly smile.

"My dear child, you are no adept in deception; so do not attempt it now, but confess that you are suffering mentally and physically. What troubles you, darling? your eyes are filled with tears."

The drooping head pillowed itself upon his bosom, and unbidden tears flowed freely.

"Lula, my precious child! do you regret so much this parting from Alfred? If so, we will recall him. Although I should have to resign one of the dearest treasures of my

household, it shall be done if it will promote your happiness."

"No, no, dear uncle; I cannot give you up for Alfred! Do not suppose for a moment that I would. Another and a much greater trial threatens me, and I am not prepared for the emergency."

"God will not lay upon you a greater trial than you are able to bear. Put your trust in Him and all will yet be well! But there is an air of mystery about you that I would like to fathom; for your aunt left you a short time since, and thought you had quite recovered; and now I find you a fit subject for Dr. Clinton. What secret influence has Miss Stanly used to bring about this change? You must make a confession, or Mary will investigate the matter."

"Oh, uncle, if you love me! please say nothing to auntie about my weakness. I will soon overcome it, and will meet her as usual. Promise, dear uncle, that you will not mention it to her!"

"I cannot refuse your request, dear child; but my promise must be conditional. If I see any more tears or pale cheeks, I will not only divulge my suspicions in regard to Miss Stanly, but will take the matter in hand myself. I will not have any wolf in sheep's clothing prowling about my premises, seeking to devour my lamb, without raising my arm in its defense."

"Thank you, dear uncle! you shall have no cause for complaint."

Then, by a strong effort, she subdued her emotion, and soon pronounced herself ready to go down. She entered the parlor with a firm step, leaning upon Mr. Herbert's arm, and took possession of the luxurious *fauteuil* which he placed for her near his wife.

Charlie nodded his head carelessly to her, and then

turned to join Julia, who stood under the arch of the bay-window, looking over a photograph album.

As he approached her, she raised her eyes, and with a bewitching smile said :

"Philopena, Mr. Herbert!"

"Whatsoever thou shalt ask of me, I will give it thee, unto the half of my kingdom," he replied, smilingly.

"Then you must abide by my decision, for I ask the head of Charlie Herbert;" and taking his photograph from Lula's album, she slipped it into her pocket.

"Since my own rashness has condemned me, I must submit," he replied, carelessly; and then turned to welcome Robert Carlton, who was just entering the room.

This young gentleman was quite a favorite with the family, and was welcomed by them with great cordiality.

Mr. Herbert remarked :

"Your presence is particularly agreeable to-day, as we are all weather-bound. Even Lula has been affected by the gloom; she has moped all day in her cage, and has not cheered us with a song."

"The prospect was certainly dismal enough in the forenoon; but the adage that 'a morning shower is like an old woman's dance, soon over,' will be verified in this instance; for the clouds are rapidly dispersing, and there will be a glorious sunset," Robert replied.

As if in fulfillment of this prophecy, a brilliant sunbeam soon darted through the window, and settled like a halo around the head of Lula as she reclined against the crimson cushion.

The eyes of the entire party were fixed with silent admiration on her lovely face, which seemed to glow with celestial brightness beneath the touch of an artist, immortal and invisible.

She made an effort to move her seat; but Mr. Herbert insisted that she would remain still for a moment.

"If Raphael could have looked upon you thus, he would have desired no greater surety of immortalization, than to have handed down to posterity the counterpart of such a faultless model," he said, gazing with genuine admiration on the artless girl.

A sweet musical laugh involuntarily burst from Lula at the conclusion of this speech; then, hastily escaping from the chair, she exclaimed:

"Oh, uncle, who would ever have suspected you of trying to foster a spirit of vanity and pride in a silly girl, by such palpable flattery!"

"And where have you learned so much impudence, young lady, as to cast that imputation on your old uncle and guardian?" he replied, playfully, as he threw his arm around her, and cut off the retreat.

Robert Carlton's admiring look plainly indicated that he considered it no flattery; he turned to see the effect of this brilliant *tableau vivant* upon Charlie, whom he had long suspected of entertaining for the lovely orphan more than a brother's regard. His gaze, also, was transfixed on the blushing girl, but with an expression so strange and sad, that Robert was completely puzzled. Then looking toward Julia, he was startled to see her beautiful face distorted with hate and envy, while her bright eyes gleamed with a fiendish glare upon poor gentle Lula.

Turning hastily, he said, in a low tone:

"Mrs. Herbert, don't you think Miss Julia would make a splendid Judith? I never saw her character more truthfully depicted. That glance is enough to have murdered Holofernes without the aid of the falchion. Donatella would have demolished his work in despair, and pronounced it a failure, if he could have seen determined vengeance so truthfully portrayed."

They sat opposite a mirror, and as Julia was in their rear, Mrs. Herbert suddenly looked up, and was shocked

by the expression which was reflected from its polished surface, and had called forth the remark from Robert.

She made no reply, but left her seat to hide her perturbation; then looking from the window, said:

"Robert, I think you were correct in your supposition about the weather. The prospect without looks cheering. I am truly rejoiced it is so, as I shall drive into town this afternoon."

Then turning to her fair guest, she remarked:

"Julia, if you accompany me, it will prevent the necessity of your mother troubling to send for you."

"Thank you, Mrs. Herbert. If you go, I shall be pleased to accompany you; but are you not afraid to venture out? Mother has always charged me to guard against dampness."

"I have no fears on that score. I resided long enough in England to learn the art of exercising, even in wet weather."

Robert Carlton saw that Julia was quite disconcerted at the thought of having her visit terminate so speedily, and was cruel enough to rejoice at her discomfiture. He even determined to add to it by recalling a reminiscence of her school days, and said:

"Miss Julia, did your mother ever tell you about my calling at your house, the day after Dr. Hall's examination, and her ordering a servant to bring some new books from your room, that I might amuse myself while she replied to a note? Through mistake your old Algebra was brought, but your mother was too much interested in writing to notice it, or to see me take from the book a document which was of considerable importance about that time. I thought the loss would not inconvenience you as much as it did others, and you would probably forgive the theft, especially when I tell you it is still in my possession, subject to the owner's order. But excuse me, Miss Julia,

you are not well!" he added, as the fair culprit turned deathly pale, and trembled before him.

Charlie had not heeded Robert's speech, but observed her agitation, and supposing that it was produced by sudden illness, handed a goblet of water, which fortunately stood near. The draught partially restored her, and returning the goblet, with a tender glance, she remarked:

"I suffer frequently from severe paroxysms in my side, and for this reason mamma thinks I should be very careful, and not expose myself to the weather."

She arose and crossed the room; then asked:

"At what time will you ride, Mrs. Herbert? I am anxious to return home, for I shall be in constant dread of another attack."

In leaving the room, she passed near Robert, and in a scarcely audible whisper said:

"I'm afraid, Mr. Carlton, you are laboring under a strange mistake with regard to that paper. I wish you would call to-morrow, and give me an opportunity of removing any false impression you may have formed relative to its being in my possession."

Then bowing her head, she left the room.

"Robert, I hope that your fun-loving propensity has not caused you to rob Miss Stanly of some amatory epistle," said Mr. Herbert, when they were alone.

"No, indeed, sir! The paper I referred to was Miss Lula's composition, which you may remember was lost or misplaced two years ago. Dr. Hall expected that it would take the first premium, and has never ceased to regret its disappearance. Alfred Raymond told me at the time that he had good reasons for thinking that Julia filched it from the doctor's desk, and his suspicions were confirmed by my finding it soon after in one of her school books. I would have mentioned this circumstance to Charlie, immediately, but he was absent; and then our own troubles commenced

about that time, and I was diverted from my purpose. I left for college soon after mother recovered from that severe attack of illness, and since my return the affair has never occurred to me, until I saw Miss Julia's envious, jealous look bent so savagely on her unsuspecting victim. Then I could not resist the desire to remind the guilty creature of her former treachery."

"Is it not probable that it was placed there accidentally by some one else? Surely one so beautiful could not be guilty of such depravity!" was Mr. Herbert's reply.

Robert then related to him what Alfred had seen and heard after the examination, and Mr. Herbert was convinced.

The carriage was soon announced, and Julia appeared prepared to leave. Before her departure, she found occasion to say to Charlie:

"You will come soon, and let me in some measure supply the place of the loved and the lost."

"I will," was his reply, as he took the hand held out to him.

He watched the carriage until it passed out of sight, then turned and walked slowly into the house, indulging sad and gloomy thoughts, believing himself the most unhappy of mortals.

CHAPTER XV.

Alas! they had been friends in youth!
But whispering tongues can poison truth;
And constancy lives in realms above,
And life is thorny; and youth is vain;
And to be wroth with one we love,
Doth work like madness in the brain.

IMMEDIATELY after the departure of the two ladies, a telegram was received demanding Mr. Herbert's or his son's presence in New York, and before Mrs. Herbert returned, it had been decided that Charlie should leave on the night train.

He was glad of an opportunity to absent himself from home, and to seek, amid the busy scenes of life, relief or forgetfulness of his present suffering.

The assertion of Julia in regard to Lula's clandestine engagement might have passed unheeded, after its first startling announcement, if he had not been convinced of its truth by that tender scene between the lovers. This was sufficient proof that Miss Stanly had spoken advisedly; and in his distress and despair, poor Charlie could scarcely resist the temptation of offering himself to the beautiful girl who so earnestly tendered her sympathy to him in his sorrow.

In communing with himself, he asked:

"What better evidence could I desire to test the sincerity of her attachment to me, than the confession which had fallen involuntarily from her lips, and was afterward tearfully, blushing repented?"

But in taking this important step, he would certainly

incur the displeasure of his parents, and therefore prudence demanded that he should at least wait until his return, and then seek to conciliate them.

Although it might require time to remove their prejudices, he felt sure of success in the end, as they had never unreasonably opposed his wishes; and would not now allow their hastily formed opinions to destroy the happiness of their only child.

"Let them see her divested of that habitual cloak of proud reserve, and they cannot fail to love the gentle confiding heart which tenderly and warmly beats beneath its cold armor," he said, mentally.

Smile not, reader, at this absurd conclusion of Charlie's, for he is by no means the first, nor will he be the last sensible young gentleman who has been or can be hoodwinked by a beautiful and artful woman. Notwithstanding some quaint old writer has said that a "man's cranium contained one more cell than that of the weaker sex," perhaps his own vanity prevented his knowing that the extra cell was often a vacuum.

Shakspeare did not incline to the opinion of this old writer, for, among the assembled wisdom of the Venetian court, there was not sagacity enough to extricate the amiable Antonio from Shylock's savage bond. Yet how easily was it accomplished by a woman!

We are no advocate for woman's rights, nor do we insist upon the superiority, or even equality of the sex; but wish to show any young gallant, who is disposed to pronounce Charlie Herbert a silly fellow for being so easily entrapped, that he is not a solitary exception by any means. For when a woman goes forth to conquer, endowed with beauty, and panoplied by art, her victim must make an unconditional surrender, or escape under some rival's banner.

Mr. and Mrs. Herbert, with Robert Carlton, were in

the hall, to take leave of Charlie, who stood moodily buttoning his gloves, glancing occasionally around as if expecting some one, whose coming would precipitate his departure.

The watchful eyes of his mother had observed this uneasiness, and interpreting his meaning, she said:

"Lula was anxious to come out and bid you good-by, but I persuaded her to remain quiet, as she is far from being well."

These words were scarcely out of his mother's mouth before he darted off toward the parlor.

The poor girl was reclining on the sofa, with one little white hand shading her eyes; so still and quiet did she appear, that Charlie supposed her sleeping, and stood for a moment gazing sadly upon the still figure.

A silent tear came trickling down from beneath her hand, and he dropped on his knee at her side.

"Birdie, poor little Birdie! are you still suffering?" he asked, tenderly, as he kissed her forehead.

"My head aches very badly," she replied, faintly, and her tears began to flow rapidly.

Then she added:

"Charlie, you have scarcely spoken to me to-day. Are you vexed with your sister?"

Every generous feeling of his heart was brought into action by this simple, touching appeal. Julia Stanly was forgotten for the time: he only remembered that he had failed to act a brother's part—that he had broken his allegiance to the gentle orphan whom he had promised to love and cherish as a sister.

"Forgive me, my darling! my sister, forgive me! I was unhappy, and did not suppose that you would notice my neglect, when your heart was filled with love for another. Raymond is a noble fellow; he is worthy of you, my sister," he said, heroically.

"Charlie, if you don't hurry, the cars will leave you," cried Mr. Herbert, from the hall.

The unhappy young man kissed Lula's sorrowful face again, and hurried from the room, before she could reply.

A strange startled expression from those dark-blue eyes had greeted his last remark, and haunted him through the long and tedious journey.

Mrs. Herbert's suspicions soon became aroused in regard to Robert Carlton's intentions. His admiration for Lula was very evident, and the watchful guardianess feared that another treasured friendship must be sacrificed. She thought how difficult it was for an unsophisticated girl, who possessed beauty and amiability, upon entering society, to steer safely between Scylla and Charybdis. If she is interesting and strives to please and be pleased, every conceited fop will pronounce her a flirt and coquette if she does not accept his addresses instantly, and promise to love, honor, and obey him. Or if quiet and reserved, she is neglected like the modest violet, and often left to blush unseen.

Robert Carlton was no senseless fop, but a wild, impulsive young man, who had never been taught restraint or self-denial. His parents had ever indulged him to the fullest extent, and from the time he could mount a pony, he was permitted to rove *ad libitum*, with his gun and dog, to the terror of his gentle mother, and the admiration of his thoughtless father. True, he possessed noble and generous traits of character, which, with proper training, might have brought him forth as pure gold from the furnace; but the firm and gentle rein so much needed to guide him in the path of rectitude, was never drawn to the right nor the left, and the wayward youth was left to his own freedom and pleasure.

In his own home, Robert's will was the supreme law, and all were compelled to succumb to his wishes, for it was

well understood that he could brook no disappointment. Although too generous to take advantage of friend or foe, he did not possess sufficient moral courage to bear a defeat. This morbid sensibility had increased with his years, and when his heart was engaged in pursuit of an object, no honorable means were left untried by which he might accomplish his purpose. But should his efforts prove unsuccessful, he would sink into despondency and imagine himself an Ishmaelite, with every man's hand turned against him. During these uncontrollable fits of depression, when tortured by imaginary disgrace and mortification, he would resort to the sparkling wine until the ruddy liquid brought back warmth to his sinking heart, and life and vigor to his sluggish spirits.

Since the elopement and marriage of his sister, to whom he was sincerely attached, he had utterly depreciated woman's character, and never allowed an opportunity to escape when he could manifest his contempt for the weakness and inferiority of the sex. He made some few exceptions to this rule. His mother he loved devotedly; yet he saw and deplored her deficiencies; but Mrs. Herbert he honored and revered. He could have knelt and worshiped at her feet with as much reverence and holy love as a Romanist would before some patron saint. He believed that the mantle of her truth and wisdom had fallen upon Lula, and thought it fitted with bewitching grace this lovely girl who unconsciously occupied the inmost shrine of his adoring heart.

A few days after Charlie's departure, the family at Belvoir were agreeably surprised by a visit from Annie Sunderland.

After greeting Mrs. Herbert affectionately, she turned to Lula and expressed great concern at her pale cheeks and languid appearance, and said:

"You remind me of some exquisite statue fresh from the

sculptor's hand, in that pure white morning dress. What is the matter, darling?"

"I have been a little indisposed for several days. I think it is the warm weather which completely enervates me; but now that you have come, I mean to be quite well again."

"You look almost as white as Alfred did the other morning when he came down to breakfast like a specter, and told us he was obliged to leave immediately, and perhaps would never see us again. Oh, Lula! he appeared so miserable, and would give us no clew to his distress. I sometimes think he has committed suicide, for we can hear nothing whatever of him. My noble cousin, I fear he will never return!"

"Oh, Annie! have pity on my poor child!" cried Mrs. Herbert in alarm, as she sprung toward Lula, who had fainted.

"What have I done? Oh, Mrs. Herbert! tell me what is the matter with Lula?" exclaimed Annie, as she instantly aroused herself and flew to her friend's assistance.

"Hush! not another word about Alfred. I will explain when she recovers," was the hurried reply.

* * * * *

When at length Lula opened her eyes, she gazed into her aunt's face with such pleading, yearning tenderness, that in spite of Mrs. Herbert's efforts to control herself, the tears fell from her eyes, and she clasped the suffering girl convulsively to her breast.

"My poor, suffering child! tell me what distresses you? what can I do for you?" said she.

"My head aches a little, but it is passing off now. Don't worry about me, dear auntie; I shall soon be well. Please tell me what Annie said about Alfred? Is he really dead? What did she say?"

"She only mentioned that he left home suddenly. That is all she knows about him. Don't let it annoy you, my dear child! I am certain we shall hear from him very soon."

Mrs. Herbert could not be convinced that Lula was in no danger, until Dr. Clinton came and prescribed for her.

After she had fallen asleep, the anxious lady thought it necessary to inform Dr. Clinton and Annie of what had passed between Alfred and Lula, of his unexpected proposal, his strange manner and sudden flight, and Lula's uncontrollable grief, at being the cause of his distress.

Of the poison administered by Julia Stanly in the form of gossip, fabricated by herself to further her heartless designs, Mrs. Herbert could not speak, as this had escaped her watchful ear.

After a quiet night's rest, Lula was so much refreshed, that she was left during the forenoon to Annie's care.

Taking advantage of this favorable opportunity, the orphan gave her friend an account of Julia's unexpected visit, and the cruel reasons which that young lady said the gossips had assigned for the refusal of Raymond and others.

"Oh, Annie, please advise me what to do! I cannot go to auntie, and am at a loss what to do or how to act. I am certain Charlie has heard something unpleasant about me, from his singular conduct the day before he left home."

"Poor, artless, unsuspecting child! Can't you see through the plot? It is a ruse of Julia's to catch Charlie herself, and she hopes by appealing to your pride, that you will be provoked into accepting some one else, and leave the way open to her," was Annie's laughing reply.

"Oh! you certainly cannot think that she has any designs of that nature?" said Lula, in tremulous tones.

"Indeed, I do! and now I remember, Sallie Ridgely mentioned on yesterday, that Julia had his photograph,

and pretended to value it very highly 'for certain reasons,' which would astonish the *beau monde* soon; she said also, that she corresponded with him; for Sallie saw an envelope directed to Mr. Charles Herbert, Fifth Avenue Hotel, New York. When this was told me, we had a good laugh at her expense, thinking that Charlie understood her character too well to be caught by any of her arts. But since you have spoken of her visit and its consequences, I must believe she has made great progress in his good graces. To do this, she would not hesitate to slander and traduce father, mother, brother, or sister. But do not give her another thought, dear Lula, she cannot injure you. Let us talk of something else. I came to congratulate you on your good fortune in being co-heiress to Mrs. Grant's valuable estate, but your indisposition has prevented my saying anything about it before," said Annie, wishing to divert the thoughts of her companion from unpleasant subjects.

"Yes, I had forgotten poor Mrs. Grant and her kindness to me. Did you ever know of anything so strange and unexpected? To think that I may probably end my days under the same roof where my sainted mother's last lingering look of love rested on her poor little orphan child!" was the sad reply.

"Lula, I did not wish to awaken any painful reminiscences by referring to your good fortune; but since you are disposed to melancholy this morning, allow me to divert your thoughts, by informing you that Dr. Clinton has designs on that house himself. His idea is to have it thoroughly renovated, and to commence housekeeping there very soon." Then she added, with a heightened blush:

"I suppose it is not necessary to tell you whom he has engaged as housekeeper?"

"Oh, Annie! I am delighted to know that it has all

been arranged so satisfactorily at last; and if uncle and auntie are anxious to get rid of me, I can live with you and occupy my same little room, if you can't spare me a larger one."

"You shall always have the best room in the house, darling, and it would be charming to have you there always; but if I mistake not, those dear friends you have just mentioned will not allow you to occupy it very often. We will arrange this matter at another time, Lula dear; but you must excuse me, if I speak of my own affairs at present."

Then she continued:

"Dr. Clinton insists that our wedding shall take place one month from to-day. Consequently, I have but little time to consult with Mrs. Herbert and yourself in regard to the purchase of my *trousseau*. You are to be first bridesmaid, remember."

Mrs. Herbert entered the room, and soon all were deep in the mysteries of fashion and the toilet.

Douglas Jerrold says, "Ask a woman to a tea-party in the garden of Eden, and she will say, 'I can't go without a new gown.'"

As matrimony and a wedding are to many an Eden in prospective, it is not to be supposed that a young lady could be indifferent to an event of this kind, especially when she is to act a part so important as that of our friend Annie. Therefore we will not intrude longer on the privacy of Lula's boudoir, but leave them to discuss the absorbing topic.

Previous to her departure, Annie took occasion to apprise Mrs. Herbert of Julia Stanly's secret attempt to poison Lula's happiness.

The high-toned matron turned pale with indignation at this new evidence of the heartless girl's envy and malice toward the artless, unoffending orphan, and determined to

guard her treasure still more faithfully in future from such dangerous companionship.

About three weeks after young Herbert's departure his father entered the parlor, and said :

"My dear, I received a letter from Charlie this morning. He thinks it probable that he may return in time for Annie's wedding;" then added :

"Here is one for you also, of a later date I presume, as mine should have been received on yesterday."

"I hope he may return in time," replied Mrs. Herbert, as she opened the envelope and eagerly read its contents.

Immediately an exclamation of astonishment escaped from her lips, which attracted her husband's attention, and caused him to lay aside the paper he was reading and inquire :

"What does Charlie write?"

"He says that Alice Carlton is a widow, and in destitute circumstances, her husband having died of *mania-a-potu* some time since. Her father-in-law failed soon after the unfortunate marriage, and the mother is now keeping a boarding-house, while poor Alice is doing the drudgery of the family. Charlie says also, that when she met and recognized him on the street she was so agitated at the sight of one from home that she burst into a flood of tears. He walked with her and gathered these facts. She had never heard directly from home since her marriage, and this meeting with him caused her real pleasure. He says further, she is the most complete image of hopeless despair he has ever seen—that her voiceless woe and her beautiful statue-like appearance attracted his attention before he was aware of her being his former friend. He wishes me to see Mrs. Carlton and intercede for poor Alice, that she may be allowed to return home."

"Truly, the way of the transgressor is hard," remarked Mr. Herbert.

"Poor Alice! she must return home. I will go immediately and plead for her. A mother will never turn a deaf ear to the cry of a penitent child."

Mrs. Herbert took up her letter again, and read it carefully; then sighing heavily, said:

"Mr. Herbert, I cannot imagine what strange infatuation has possessed and influenced Charlie recently. In the first place, he was jealous of Alfred Raymond, and treated him with marked coolness. His next freak was a pretended admiration for Julia Stanly, and almost a dislike to Lula, whom he scarcely noticed on the day he left home, although she was suffering so much at the time. I understand that Julia makes no secret of her love or fancy for him, and displays his photograph as a great treasure, besides letters, which she boasts of having received from him during his absence. In his letter to me he writes: 'I suppose the length of my absence is a matter of perfect indifference to Lula; but I know there is a pair of bright black eyes that watch for me, and will grow brighter at my coming.'"

"Why, the boy is absolutely crazy! I have a great inclination to order a straight-jacket put on him, and post him off to the lunatic asylum as soon as he returns home. Though I think Robert Carlton might tell him something about his innamorata that would change the current of his fancy. That girl is a perfect Sybarite in her taste, and loves nothing but wealth, luxury, and herself. Narcissus was never more deeply enamored of his own image than the heartless beauty is with her charming person."

"I understand her character so thoroughly that it is particularly mortifying to hear Charlie's name in connection with hers. The idea of his entertaining the slightest regard or admiration for Julia Stanly is too absurd and ridiculous. However, I will not allow it to vex me any further, but will drive over to Mr. Carlton's and intercede for poor Alice."

When this amiable lady returned from her visit, she informed Mr. Herbert and Lula that her mission had been quite successful, and added:

"Mr. and Mrs. Carlton were overjoyed at the thought of having Alice at home, since the only obstacle to her coming had been removed by death. They both shed tears at the idea of their beautiful, tenderly-nurtured daughter performing a menial's duties in a boarding-house; and Mr. Carlton immediately telegraphed for Charlie to bring her home without fail."

A few days after the events recorded above, Mr. and Mrs. Herbert welcomed with great pleasure their young friend, the Hon. Mr. Gordon, a son of Lord Huntington, to Belvoir.

As he is a personage of considerable importance, he will be formally introduced to the reader in the next chapter.

CHAPTER XVI.

The light of love, the purity of grace,
The mind, the music breathing from her face,
The heart whose softness harmonized the whole,—
And oh! that eye was in itself a soul.

"LET us walk into the exhibition rooms. I am anxious to see that picture of Charles Hamilton's which has turned the heads of all who look upon its rare beauty. It is said to be the finest thing he has ever painted; if so, it must rival the celebrated portraits of Reynolds and Lawrence," said Lord Huntington to his friend Arthur Leslie, as they wended their way along one of the crowded thoroughfares of the great British metropolis. "Hamilton is a countryman of yours, Leslie," he continued, "and has recently returned from a residence among the works of art, in Italy. He is an artist of considerable merit and brilliant imagination; his admirers, among whom are the most noble in the land, place him on an equality with Reynolds, Lawrence, and Van Dyke. In brilliancy and truth of coloring, he displays that perfection and freshness which is peculiar to the productions of Titian. The piece now on exhibition he calls the portrait of an American lady, but our people are disposed to be incredulous upon the subject, and always speak of it as the artist's dream. I understand that he refused to part with it for three hundred pounds, which was offered by the Duke of Bedford. It is said that he cannot be prevailed upon to part with it for any amount of money."

"We will hasten then to behold this embodiment of the painter's dream, and award to it the palm of beauty, if it

is only half so lovely as your glowing description of the artist has led me to expect," replied Leslie.

They entered the gallery whose permanent beauties were well worthy of note, independent of the exquisite specimens fresh from the easels of modern painters.

There is Michael Angelo's superb painting of the Raising of Lazarus, which is considered by some the most important specimen of the Italian school in England. The embarkation of the Queen of Sheba, by Claude, an Adoration of the Shepherds, by Rembrandt, and many others of the same class will claim the attention, but our friends are attracted in another direction by the words:

"Beautiful! exquisite! divine!" repeated by numbers of the vast crowd, and Huntington and Leslie soon stood before a picture of one of the most angelic and beautiful nymphs that ever emanated from a poet's pen or artist's pencil.

It was a full-length portrait of a lovely girl, just verging into womanhood. Her face was of the Grecian type and exquisitely delicate, her forehead broad and fair; eyebrows finely arched, eyes soft and dovelike, beaming with happiness and fixed confidently on the spectators, while the sweet lips curved like Cupid's bow ready to send the fatal arrow into some victim's heart. Her dark hair waved with a golden ripple over the temple, and the pearly shell-like ears were peeping from beneath the shining mass. A wreath of geranium leaves was gracefully twined around her classical head and trailed upon a neck of exquisite mould and purity. Dignity, sweetness, and simplicity were blended so beautifully in the picture, that the spectators were completely enchanted. The corsage of her dress displayed to the best possible advantage the finely turned throat and tapering shoulders. One beautifully rounded arm rested lightly on a table of antique shape, while the other hung carelessly at her side. The gossamer text-

ure of her white dress gave to the whole picture an ethereal look, and that, together with an indescribable expression about the face, caused the worshipping crowd to fancy themselves in the presence of the maiden queen of heaven.

Huntington and Leslie had stood with others before that divine creation of the artist in mute astonishment; and as if mesmerized by the powerful influence of those serene and tender eyes, they heeded not the flight of time, nor appeared conscious when they were left alone in that spacious gallery. Leslie was the first to recover speech; the wild look of astonishment had gradually passed from his face, and a peculiar smile of intense delight had usurped its place. Turning from the picture to his friend who stood with folded arms and a gaze of rapture, fixed upon the spiritual beauty of that pictured face, he said smilingly:

"Huntington, how long will it be before your faculties are restored? Shall I leave you, and make an excuse to Lord Montague for your non-appearance at dinner? But, before I go, please exert yourself sufficiently to introduce me to the artist whose magic pencil has transfixed us to this spot for thirty minutes or more. I must make his acquaintance, and if he should demand the half of my estate in exchange for this portrait, I must have it. Evidently it is the likeness of one who is very near and dear to me, and I cannot suffer it to remain here exposed again to the gaze of the vulgar crowd that has flocked around it to-day. But where this artist could have met with the original of that picture, is a mystery which I am unable to solve."

"Leslie, you certainly cannot mean to imply that this is a portrait, and of one known to you? If I thought that possible, I would traverse the entire globe, only that I might kneel before, and worship so much loveliness."

"Look upon this picture, and on that," replied his

friend, taking from his bosom a miniature, which was an exact counterpart of the painting. "Introduce me now, and then you can return and trace the resemblance between them at your leisure," he added, placing the miniature in the hand of his friend.

"Leslie, let me be the purchaser. Offer him anything—everything, that the painting may be mine; the miniature is yours, and the lady is perhaps your affianced bride. If that is so, I envy you indeed; but the portrait must be mine. It shall be held sacred in my possession, so do not hesitate."

"If you will cross the Atlantic with me, Huntington, you shall see the original of that superb picture, and if you are not then disenchanted, we will allow the lady to decide who shall become the possessor of that master-piece of art."

"I would go on a pilgrimage to Mecca—to Jerusalem—to the antipodes—anywhere, to be allowed that priceless privilege," was Lord Huntington's reply.

They turned to search for Hamilton, the artist. In a distant part of the room he sat, pale and motionless, with one thin white hand supporting his noble brow, and his melancholy eyes fixed sadly on that lovely face, the unrivaled production of his own powerful genius. A visible emotion was perceptible in his countenance, when Huntington presented Leslie as an American.

Was it the name of Leslie, or the idea of meeting one of his countrymen only, that caused such agitation?—thought Huntington, as he returned to offer again his idolatrous worship before his newly found goddess.

When Leslie rejoined his friend, he said :

"It has been purchased for four hundred pounds, and is to be sent to Huntington House for the present. I had great difficulty in persuading him to sell it. It appears

that he first met this lady at some public assembly, and her beauty and artless grace made such an impression on his heart and memory, that her appearance on that memorable occasion will never be forgotten. Although he met her frequently afterward, he never sought an introduction, and he thinks the lady has no knowledge whatever of his appearance. A sort of Platonic love on his part, which is truly romantic, but which an ardent temperament cannot endure quite so philosophically," said Leslie, as they walked from the gallery.

"But how did you prevail upon him to part with it?"

"He did not intend to do so, but a presentiment has warned him that he will never reach his native land, where an invalid mother and a young sister, who are almost dependent upon him for a support, await his return. It is true that he refused to sell it to the Duke of Bedford for three hundred pounds, and would never have allowed it to pass into a stranger's hands, but he congratulates himself that it is now in the possession of a friend of the original. I offered him four hundred pounds, which he insisted was more than the value of it as a work of art; but for the sake of his mother and sister, I urged him to accept my offer."

Arthur Leslie was a young American, who, in traveling through Europe, had met Lord Huntington, and as each were bent on a tour of observation and pleasure, they found much that was congenial between them, and had pursued the same route together.

They had stood beside the classical lakes of Switzerland, and mounted the hoary summit of Mount Blanc,—they stood side by side on the brink of Vesuvius, and looked into its fearful burning lake of fire,—through the ruins of Pompeii and Herculaneum they had passed, and beheld in lonely grandeur the ruins of the Coliseum and Pantheon.

The blue waters of the Adriatic had met their gaze; and they had,

— in Venice, on the Bridge of Sighs
A palace and a prison on each hand;
Look'd to the winged Lion's marble piles,
Where Venice sate in state, throned on her hundred isles.

A friendship formed under such agreeable auspices was not to be easily sundered, and on their arrival at London, Leslie was importuned by his friend to take up his abode at Huntington House, until his departure for the United States.

Lord Huntington willingly consented to accompany his friend—to brave the fury of the ocean's foaming waves, and gratify a long-wished purpose to visit the young Republic that was making such rapid strides toward obtaining the mastery of the world.

In a few days his arrangements would be complete, and then adieu to Britain's coast, welcome Columbia's free and happy land.

A short time previous to the day appointed for their departure, Leslie received a summons to attend the death-bed of the young artist, Charles Hamilton. Distressed and shocked by this unexpected call, he hastened to the apartment of his compatriot.

Pale and attenuated, Hamilton lay on his couch; death had placed its dread signet on his brow, but failed to rob his features of their intellectual beauty. The clear blue veins could be easily traced on his pure white forehead, which appeared more marble-like from its contrast with the soft black hair that shaded it. A celestial light beamed from his large dark eyes, and the calm, holy expression of his handsome face indicated a heart at peace with God and man.

"Excuse the liberty a dying man has taken in sending

for you," he said, as he offered his emaciated hand to Leslie; then added:

"Knowing that you were to leave Europe shortly, I thought I might perhaps induce you to see my poor, dear mother and sister, and impart to them the sad intelligence which they must shortly receive. On me their earthly hopes depended. I was the strength and stay of my fond mother's declining years, and the only guardian and protector of an affectionate young sister. My poor Mary! when I think of her gentle nature, of her artlessness, her innocence and beauty, I almost doubt the wisdom and justice of God in taking me from her,—my sweet sister."

He covered his face with his hand, and wept for the blighted hopes which a knowledge of his death would cause to the loved ones in his distant home.

Tears of heartfelt sympathy fell from the eyes of Leslie as he listened to the plaintive voice of the affectionate son and brother, who feared not the terrors of death, nor dreaded to meet his God, but wept and sorrowed for the aching void his loss would create in the hearts of his mother and sister, and he attempted to comfort the dying man by offering to fill, if possible, his place in their love and affection.

"Thank you, thank you, my dear friend, for this delightful assurance. May God reward you for your kindness,—for the comfort you have given to the heart of an expiring mortal," fervently exclaimed Hamilton, as he grasped Leslie's hand.

After a short interval his feeble voice was raised in prayer.

"Oh! God of the widow and fatherless, bless and protect the dear ones, teach them submission to thy will, and may they look to thee for consolation in the afflicting dispensation of thy providence,—may they humbly bow before the throne of mercy and say 'Thy will be done.'

Forgive me, Almighty God! for murmuring at thy just pleasure, and receive me into thy presence, for Christ my Redeemer's sake."

This effort appeared to exhaust his waning strength; his eyes gently closed, and Leslie feared that the meek spirit had departed. But presently his earnest gaze was fixed on the face of his friend, and he said:

"I must endeavor to explain to you the mystery of the portrait now in your possession. At one time my father was a wealthy merchant in Columbia, South Carolina. My sister attended a seminary in Charleston, while I was sent to a Northern college. Frequent letters from Mary acquainted me with the names and characters of several of her school-mates. Among them was her particular friend Annie, the youthful belle and beauty of the city. She was the delightful theme that constantly filled these letters, and I gladly welcomed each one that contained ought of that lovely girl. Suffice it to say I loved her before I ever saw her. Previous to the termination of my collegiate course my father encountered severe losses, which threatened to dissolve his mercantile career and bring ruin to his family. When this news reached me I hastened home, and arrived at Charleston on the evening of a splendid fête given by a relative of ours. Mary, who was ignorant of father's embarrassment, was delighted to have me attend her, and I was compelled to do so, as no apology would be received. My mind was too much harassed with the deranged affairs just alluded to for me to mingle with the gay and happy throng, and I remained a silent spectator. My heart soon grew faint at the sight of so many bright and cheerful faces around me, when poverty, with its ghastly smile, was mocking at my pleasant home. I was about leaving that brilliant scene when the words beautiful—lovely—angelic—and various other adjectives of a similar nature, caused me to look in the opposite direc-

tion. Then I saw the glorious being who for months past had been my spirit's idol. No formal introduction was necessary to tell me that the lovely creature who had riveted my gaze was Annie. Mary's was a graphic pen, and the description of her friend was accurate. The wild throbbings of my heart proved her identity. It was the same sweet face that had appeared to me in dreams, and inspired me with a desire to compete for the first honors in college, that I might lay them at the feet of her I adored. 'The ancient Greek did not worship the beautiful statue, but the spirit of beauty it enshrined.' It was thus I looked on her peerless form, into her dovelike eyes, and saw the noble purity of her heart. Long and earnestly did I gaze, —and longer still would I have watched her, but the voice of my sister aroused me from further rudeness. She said, with astonishment :

"'Brother, I never knew you guilty of a breach of etiquette before ; come, let me introduce you to Annie.'

"'Not to-night, Mary, at some other time I will accept your offer ; now I am feeling too sad to interest a stranger,' was my reply.

"Again and again did Annie cross my path, like some visitant from a heavenly sphere ; but our private affairs were in such a sad condition, that I never dared to seek her notice. My sister had an indifferent likeness of Annie : this I copied, but her features are too deeply impressed upon the tablet of my memory for time ever to have erased them. Yes," he continued, "for nearly three years, her sweet image has been the bright star that guided me ; day and night have I toiled to win laurels that would enable me to seek her heart and hand. But God has ordained it otherwise, and I submit—his will not mine be done. Tell her, Leslie, that if spirits from heaven are permitted to watch over the destiny of mortals, I will protect her from every evil."

In vain had Leslie entreated him not to exhaust his strength by relating this painful history; but he felt this explanation was due his friend, and struggled hard to appear calm, while he feebly related his sad story of unrequited love. His strength was gradually declining; but, after a much longer interval than before, he continued his story.

"From my earliest childhood, I displayed a taste for painting; as I grew older it became a passion, and after my father's failure, I determined to turn to good account that talent which God had given me. By practicing the most rigid economy, I was enabled to remain and study in Italy for two years, when I was informed of the death and entire insolvency of my father. My health had begun to decline previous to this, and my only hope was to reach the United States and breathe my last upon the bosom of my dear mother. When I reached London, I found that I could proceed no farther. The few paintings I possessed were the only legacies I could bequeath to the dear ones at home; and by following the advice of a friend, who obtained permission for me to exhibit them in the Royal Academy, I succeeded in disposing of them for their real value.

"The portrait I intended to forward to my sister; but chancing to hear of your arrival with Lord Huntington, whom I knew to be an admirer of the fine arts, I thought to attract your attention by exhibiting that also. My plan succeeded, and your noble, generous conduct has been the means of cheering the desolate heart of a stranger, in a strange land, far away from kindred and friends, and of adding largely to the poor mite intended for the widow and orphan."

Hamilton lingered for a few days, but Leslie could not be induced to leave him. He esteemed it quite a privilege

to be allowed to administer comfort to that child of God who patiently waited the call of his Master to enter the realms of eternal rest. If any other inducement was necessary, the artist was the brother of Mary Hamilton, Annie's friend, of whom he had so often heard yet never seen. Hamilton's last day on earth was spent in sweet conversation with his friend. With his own hand, he severed two locks of hair from his head, and placed them in an envelope for the dear ones he was never more to behold on earth.

"Take them, Leslie," he said, "with my Bible to my mother; tell her I first prized that book because it was her gift; but it became dearer still when I learned its precious truths. It has shielded me in the hour of temptation, and brought me an humble suppliant to the throne of Mercy."

Another long interval elapsed, and he feebly articulated the words of the holy Simeon :

"Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation."

His friend soon observed that the gentle spirit was about to take its heavenward flight, and leaned over to catch the last farewell :

"Mother ! sister ! Leslie ! Annie ! farewell !"

The words sounded sadly sweet, as fainter and fainter grew the sound, until the last seemed to echo from the gates of heaven.

* * * * *

We must pass over an interval of a few weeks, and welcome our friends, Leslie and Huntington, to the hospitable shores of the United States. With a proud step, and a heart filled with gratitude to God for a prosperous voyage, Leslie sprang to the wharf at Charleston.

"Come, Huntington," said he, joyously, "let me welcome you to

My home, my home, my happy home,
Spot ever dear to me!"

Then, in defiance of the hackmen and omnibus drivers' boisterous invitations to the various hotels, they proceeded quietly to the splendid mansion of Leslie's uncle, Colonel Eaton.

There the favorite nephew and his friend were received with every demonstration of delight. The following day, Leslie bid a short adieu to Lord Huntington, leaving him to the care of Colonel Eaton, while he hurried to his mother's residence, several miles from the city, promising to return with his mother and sister in time for the festival, which Mrs. Eaton determined to give in compliment to her nephew and his friend.

"Remember, Huntington, you are to see the original of the portrait on the evening of my aunt's party; so amuse yourself in the interim by manufacturing sonnets and pretty speeches to be delivered on that occasion, if not to that particular lady, to some other pair of bright eyes which may enslave you," smilingly said Leslie.

"Am I to have no clew to the residence and name of this beautiful unknown? Tell me to whom these brilliant sonnets must be addressed."

"Impossible, my dear friend! I am not at liberty to divulge her name, and besides, she may have concluded to change it during my absence."

"God forbid!" exclaimed Lord Huntington, laughingly, as he turned from the carriage and entered the house.

The festive night arrived, and with a style of magnificence seldom witnessed in our republican land, were the saloons of Mrs. Eaton's mansions furnished. Their floors were covered with elegant carpets from the looms of Turkey, on which the heavy warrior's tread could scarcely be distinguished from the light footsteps of a tiny child. Cur-

tains of the richest silk-damask hung from gilded cornices. Divans, ottomans, and *fauteuils* of delightful softness invited the weary to repose, and on tables of exquisite workmanship were prettily arranged flowers of the richest fragrance and beauty. Splendid bronze chandeliers with long glittering pendants hung from the frescoed ceiling and threw a bright but softened radiance over the fair scene.

The beauty and fashion of the city had assembled, and Lord Huntington eagerly watched the face of every new-comer, hoping to trace some resemblance to the painted beauty, but in vain. Disappointment was plainly depicted in his expressive countenance as he turned to meet Leslie, who was then entering for the first time.

"We met with some detention on the route and could not arrive sooner," Arthur remarked as he grasped the offered hand of Huntington, who said:

"I have been cruelly disappointed, Leslie, in not seeing among the many beauties present the lady whom I hoped would be here this evening."

"She will certainly appear directly, as I have been informed, but it is quite early yet."

"Ah, she is here, it is herself!" exclaimed Huntington, in a strange and excited tone.

There indeed was the lady, who looked as if she had just stepped from the gilded frame, leaning gracefully on the arm of Colonel Eaton.

"But more beautiful, more lovely, than the portrait!" his lordship added in an undertone.

Without waiting for him to recover from the surprise her sudden appearance had occasioned, Leslie took the arm of his friend and hastened to meet the lady, then increased his astonishment by saying:

"Allow me to introduce, Miss Leslie, my sister, to Lord Huntington."

Colonel Eaton with his nephew enjoyed the confusion

of the elegant lord as he stood awkwardly blushing for the first time in his life before a lovely woman. He was not long, however, in regaining his presence of mind, and said smilingly:

"Leslie, I was not prepared for this startling announcement. During our long intimacy I never heard of any other than a little sister, and expected to have met a child, and certainly not the familiar face before me."

"Pardon the stratagem, my dear friend! I have had great difficulty in keeping the secret, and was compelled to call on my uncle and aunt for assistance. Without them I could have had no occasion for presenting Annie to you in a dress similar to the one worn by her three years ago." Then to his sister he said: "Well, Annie, do not look so inquisitive, as if you would read this mystery. Some other time I will explain how I wished to punish an incredulous friend by teasing you to appear in that particular dress. Now I must go to my aunt, who I see has been observing us closely."

On this fascinating scene we must not linger, nor attempt to describe the happiness of the young nobleman as he promenaded the spacious halls with the beautiful original of that superb portrait by his side, greatly to the annoyance and chagrin of a number of beaux present.

After participating for a few weeks in the gayeties of the city, the Leslies returned to their home, accompanied by the Eatons and Lord Huntington.

The latter gentleman appeared delighted with that special locality, and seemed in no haste to commence his tour through the United States. Many were the long walks and drives taken with Annie, and Arthur playfully whispered to her, "that the important question about the portrait would soon be decided."

Soon after his return home, Leslie with his mother sought the residence of Mrs. Hamilton. They found that amiable lady sinking fast under the heavy afflictions which had befallen her. She had long been an invalid, a victim of consumption, and on the reception of the letter containing the sad tidings of her son's death, her feeble nature sunk under the burden of her misfortunes. After a lingering illness she died, calmly, peacefully, resting her hope on the glorious promise of a union in heaven with the dear ones who had gone before, and leaving her gentle Mary, her lovely daughter, the child of sorrow, and of many tears, to the affectionate care of Mrs. Leslie.

As Leslie and Huntington had determined to remain together during the stay of the latter on this continent, a proposal was made for the whole party to join them and travel through the Northern States into Canada. This plan was readily agreed to, and soon put into execution.

Mary Hamilton was included in the party. Her consent was reluctantly obtained; but Mrs. Leslie and Annie had decided for her, thinking that an entire change of climate and the excitement of travel would do more toward restoring her health and spirits, than all the drugs of *Æsculapius*. The poor orphan struggled hard to suppress her grief and be amused and interested according to the earnest desire of her friends; but the forced smiles and tearful eyes told the sad story of her lonely, troubled heart. Nothing seemed to arouse her to an appreciation of life—its important realities and duties—until she gazed with awe-struck wonder upon the grand and imposing Falls of Niagara.

With head upraised, and look intent,
And eye and ear attentive bent,
And locks flung back, and lips apart,
Like monument of Grecian art,—

she stood and gazed with mute rapture upon the glorious spectacle. Then, after some moments, her suspended breath escaped with a deep, quivering sigh, and apparently oblivious of all others, she repeated in a calm, sweet voice:

The thoughts are strange that crowd into my brain
While I look upward to thee. It would seem
As if God pour'd thee from his hollow hand,
And hung his bow upon thy awful front;
And spoke in that lov'd voice that seem'd to him
Who dwelt in Patmos for his Saviour's sake,
The sound of many waters; and had bade
Thy flood to chronicle the ages back,
And notch his cent'ries in the eternal rocks!
Deep calleth unto deep. And what are we
That hear the question of that voice sublime?
Oh! what are all the notes that ever rung
From war's vain trumpet by thy thundering side?
Yea, what is all the riot man can make
In his short life, to thy unceasing roar?
And yet bold babbler, what art thou to Him
Who drown'd a world, and heap'd the waters far
Above its loftiest mountains? A light wave
That breathes and whispers of its Maker's might.

The travelers returned toward the latter part of September with every anticipation realized in regard to the pleasure and benefit of their tour. Lord Huntington parted from Annie Leslie, as his affianced bride, and after an absence of twelve months returned to his home in England.

The heart of Arthur Leslie was not proof against the beauty and many amiable qualities of Mary Hamilton; and before she had long been an inmate of his mother's family, he surrendered heart, hand, and fortune to the lovely girl. Had it been in the power of Mrs. Leslie and Annie to have chosen from the whole world, their selection for a companion and wife of the son and brother would have been dear Mary Hamilton.

A few months rolled away, and then a large and fashionable party were assembled at the mansion of Mrs. Leslie, to witness the double wedding of Arthur Leslie and Mary Hamilton, followed by Lord Huntington and Annie Leslie. Various were the opinions expressed in regard to the beauty of the two brides. Some gave preference to the composed and dignified Lady Huntington; and others to the gentle, blushing Mrs. Arthur Leslie. The bridal parties embarked for England. Amid smiles and tears, the beautiful Lady Annie bid farewell to her childhood's home and the treasured scenes of early years, to brave the world with him who had won the affection of her heart.

From the clear blue eyes of Mary Leslie there beamed a quiet happiness, which the tears shed at this brief parting from home could not conceal. The weight of loneliness was removed from her young heart, and she now had the strong affection of a devoted husband to support and strengthen her in every future trial. For the purpose of visiting the resting-place of her artist brother, she decided to accompany Annie to her distant home.

Long, long years have passed since then, which had strengthened the bonds and accumulated joys and but few sorrows for the bridal pairs; and now after a long interval, the Hon. Mr. Gordon, a son of Lord Huntington and Annie Leslie, had come to the United States for the purpose of visiting his mother's relatives and to view the wonders of the great republic. As Mrs. Herbert and Lady Huntington had been friends in Charleston during their girlhood, their intimacy was renewed in London, and promises were made to exchange visits whenever circumstances would permit. Mr. Gordon had fulfilled his promise, and was now the welcomed and delighted guest of the Herberts.

The hospitable doors of Belvoir were thrown open to a select circle of congenial friends, and each day and night

witnessed some delightful reunion of choice spirits, where conversation, music, and dancing reigned, and whiled the hours away.

The sports and amusements of the Southern planter's guests during the day were varied, and parties were formed and left to do whatever their inclination might suggest. The smooth and well-trodden roads invited evening rides and drives, which were often extended for miles through the grand and heavily timbered forests, where the silence and stillness of nature were wonderful and awe-inspiring. Game of various kinds abounded, and those who were disposed to hunt added to the varied profusion of the table on their return by the trophies of the chase, and were refreshed and invigorated by the sport and excitement. As evening advanced to its close, a flotilla of light and airy boats enticed them to an exhilarating sail on the beautiful river; and as the parties in picturesque costumes floated gently down the embowered stream, inhaling the perfumes of bays and magnolias, while rich, full voices in softened melody chimed sweetly with the splashing oars, they reminded one of a fleet of gay gondolas.

Each day's sport and pleasure was concluded by the party assembling *en masse* at some hospitable mansion, where a gracious welcome and every comfort and luxury awaited them.

So perfect seemed the machinery that guided these well-ordered establishments, that whether the additional party numbered more than the muses or less than the graces, no perceptible difference was ever apparent to a critical observer. The servants had their particular duties assigned to them, and prided themselves on the skill, order, and system that prevailed in their respective departments, consequently no confusion or disorder ever occurred to disturb the pleasure and quietude of the surprise parties which frequently graced the halls of the Southern planter.

CHAPTER XVII.

All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women are merely players;
They have their exits, and their entrances,
And one man in his time plays many parts.

THE theater was crowded from pit to gallery with a courteous and select audience. The attraction was "The Lady of Lyons."

When Julia Stanly entered with her party, she immediately became a rallying point for opera-glasses. Of this fact she was perfectly conscious, and as she stood for a moment before taking her seat, and threw a sweeping glance over the assembly, the expression of her face plainly said: "Look and admire! You will find none here to compare with me."

She seated herself, and brought into requisition her own lorgnette, which was carried by quite an elderly would-be young gentleman, who appeared exceedingly uncomfortable in a new suit of broadcloth, fresh from the hands of a fashionable tailor. He was simpering and giggling like some great shame-faced school-boy, as he endeavored to rehearse the agreeable nonsense and pretty speeches that had been forgotten for more than a quarter of a century. Julia enjoyed admiration—indeed it was the one pleasure of her existence—and in lieu of better company, she listened with pleased attention to his silly flattery, scarcely deigning to notice the entrance of Robert Carlton and Sallie Ridgely, who seated themselves near her.

The curiosity of the new-comers was aroused to the high-

est pitch by the sight of Julia's venerable smirking beau, who was evidently acting a new *rôle*, from the vigorous manner in which he flirted the dainty fan before the face of his inamorata, and gazed admiringly upon her beautiful face. They looked on smilingly and wondered, then at each other, and asked simultaneously:

"Who can it be?"

Robert laughed and said:

"Some old nabob just from the gold diggings;" but not satisfied with this solution, he added:

"Miss Julia knows of old that you and I were children of inquiring minds, therefore she will not think it strange if we wish to be enlightened in regard to this fossil remain to which her beauty has imparted new life. Ask her?"

Sallie leaned forward and whispered softly:

"Julia, if Charlie Herbert was present he might be jealous of your devoted attendant. Who is he?"

"Mr. Rivers, from Louisiana, a millionaire. Charlie would have no reason to complain if he was here, for then I should have no eyes nor ears for any one else."

"When did you hear from him, and when will he return?"

"Don't try to bring me to a confession in public. He says he will not linger."

Just then there was a general commotion, and lorgnettes were directed toward a party who were entering. Julia Stanley turned to look, and her eyes flashed with wonder, envy, and malice, as she watched Lula Graham glide gracefully into a seat, followed by a gentleman of remarkable personal attractions and decided foreign air, who placed himself by her side.

Julia turned hastily to the party in her rear, and asked abruptly:

"Mr. Carlton, who is that handsome aristocratic-looking foreigner?"

"It is probably a Prince Royal of England, the Czar of Russia, or the Sultan of Turkey,—I can't locate him precisely," replied Robert Carlton with a quizzical smile, as he noticed her astonishment. After a moment's pause, he added :

"You may have heard that these rival suitors were contending for the hand of Miss Graham, the queen of beauty and of song. You must play your cards well, Miss Stanly, for probably our republican queen may promote you to the post of maid of honor, as you love and admire her so truly. Then I hope you will endeavor to forward the interest of your humble servant, who aspires to the exalted position of boot-black to his imperial majesty. I always apply myself to the *understanding* of a person when I desire to secure my own advancement."

The curtain rose, and very soon Madame Deschappelles says to Pauline:

"You are born to make a great marriage. Beauty is valuable or worthless according as you invest the property to the best advantage."

Julia turned to Sallie, and said softly:

"Those are my sentiments; you had better take them into consideration and profit by the madame's advice."

"But I cannot find another Charlie Herbert," replied Miss Ridgely.

"No, that is true, I know; but you may invest with Mr. Rivers,—let me introduce you."

"Excuse me, if you please; I would advise you to secure the old gentleman for yourself, for fear that Charlie may fly the track; he is young and exposed to a thousand temptations."

"Oh, he is securely caged, and I hold the key! see for yourself."

Julia raised her *chatelaine* and opened a locket, which revealed his photograph, and whispered:

"Is that tale Robert Carlton told me about Lula Graham's royal suitors really true?"

Sallie gave a little musical laugh, and answered:

"How can I tell? He spoke seriously, and is intimate with the family; I should think he ought to know."

She fell back into her seat, while an amused and irrepressible smile continued upon her lips to the close of the first act.

Then Robert inquired with much interest:

"What has transpired to disturb your equanimity?"

"Oh, Julia is very much exercised in regard to Lula's illustrious suitors, and wished to know if your information respecting them is reliable."

Her companion laughed outright, and his mischievous eyes actually danced with glee at the success of his silly hoax. He said:

"She believes it implicitly, because she knows Lula merits a superior destiny; but at the same time she would prefer seeing her ferried by Charon over the River Styx, rather than have her sail across the Atlantic in a royal vessel to occupy a throne, and wear the richest crown that the Old World could offer. Did I not see her exhibit a photograph just now as indifferently as an Indian would the scalp of his murdered victim?"

"Yes," was the laughing reply.

"Tell me who the unfortunate creature is, that I may ask the prayers of the Church in his behalf."

"I'm afraid you would not survive the announcement."

"Try me; I will nerve myself for the startling disclosure."

"I think you will run a fearful risk, but I would sacrifice my present hopes of a lover to find out how she got it in her possession."

"If you don't tell me quickly, these good people will be

treated to a tragedy which the bill does not call for, as I shall expire from curiosity."

"Then brace yourself for the trying ordeal. I am given to understand that it is the photograph of her betrothed lover, Mr. Charles Herbert."

"Great Jupiter! Who?"

His loud exclamation and merry laugh startled the entire assembly as the curtain rose for the second act. At length, after many ineffectual attempts to subdue his laughter, he finally succeeded in a measure, and divided his attention between the stage and the actors before him.

The old gentleman appeared completely fascinated with Julia's brilliant beauty, while he ogled and simpered incessantly as he plied with energy and perseverance the delicate snowy-plumed fan, which being totally unfitted for such vigorous handling, was growing beautifully less as the white down arose from the wreck and floated in the air.

Julia sought to attract the notice of Lula's distinguished escort by engaging her in conversation, but this attempt was met by the orphan girl with such frigid politeness that the artful creature was completely foiled, and forced back upon her antique admirer for companionship.

In the second act, Claude Melnotte, in passionate tones, paints

The home to which, could love fulfill its prayers,

he would lead Pauline.

A palace lifting to eternal summer
Its marble walls, from out a glossy bower
Of coolest foliage musical with birds,
Whose songs should syllable thy name! At noon
We'd sit beneath the arching vines, and wonder
Why Earth could be unhappy, while the Heavens
Still left us youth and love! We'd have no friends
That were not lovers; no ambition, save

To excel them all in love; we'd read no books
 That were not tales of love—that we might smile
 To think how poorly eloquence of words
 Translates the poetry of hearts like ours!
 And when night came, amidst the breathless Heavens
 We'd guess what star should be our home when love
 Becomes immortal; while the perfumed light
 Stole through the mists of alabaster lamps,
 And every air was heavy with the sighs
 Of orange groves and music from sweet lutes,
 And murmurs of low fountains that gush forth
 I' the midst of roses!—Dost thou like the picture?

During this recital Mr. Rivers ceased to wave the fan, and fixed his dull eyes on the speaker. When it was ended, his gaze was again riveted on the lovely face at his side, and he said, in a quick, nervous, husky voice:

"'Tis thus I would woo thee. Dost thou like the picture?"

Then, as if ashamed of expressing his feelings so ardently, he blushed like some overgrown school-boy, fell back upon his seat, and renewed the fanning process more vigorously than before.

Julia looked up to his face, and remarked, softly and tenderly:

"Beautiful, beautiful. Who could not be won by such a picture?"

This speech had on the elderly swain the effect of a plunge into the fabled fountain of Ponce de Leon: his courage was restored, his tongue was unloosed, and he chatted and giggled until Robert Carlton exclaimed indignantly:

"I really believe the old Snap's tongue is fixed on a pivot to run at both ends."

Sallie laughed, and said:

"Robert, unless you hold your own tongue I shall disgrace myself, and you too, by laughing. Almost every

eye in the house has been on us, and I have scarcely been able to hear a word of the play. I fear they will hiss us presently."

"Fiddlesticks! the actors on the stage are humbugs compared to those in front of us. I believe the next is the last act, and I shall be strongly tempted to give that old coon a silent nudge to listen and heed when General Damas vents his indignation on the fickleness and faithlessness of woman, for Miss Julia is willfully leading him on into the broad road to destruction. Alas! poor Charlie! friend of my childhood and youth! My heart bleeds in secret for the woes that await thee," he added in mock-tragic tones; then burying his face in his handkerchief, he laughed immoderately.

Sallie tried to maintain her gravity, and when his paroxysm was over, she asked, artlessly:

"Robert, how do you suppose she possessed herself of that photograph?"

"Not honestly, I can assure you. I have given the matter serious consideration, and the result of my cogitations is that she is in league with the Evil One, and if Charlie gave her his likeness, she has visited him in slumber and anointed his eyes with some magic ointment, thereby blotting out all remembrance of the past and causing her to appear to him as beautiful in mind as she is in person. But after her cruelty toward Lula, whom she has reviled and backbitten until his Satanic Majesty might have vetoed the slander, to see his photograph dangling from the *chatelaine* of that treacherous girl, is enough to make the Pope of Rome rend his pontifical robes and swear like a trooper, or cause the Angel Gabriel to give a sudden blast of his trumpet in order to stop such absurd and outrageous wickedness. The idea is so perfectly ridiculous that I can only laugh at it, and I suspect that if Charlie was aware of the fact, he would be as much amused as ourselves."

They turned their attention to the stage, and listened quietly until Damas was convinced that Pauline had consented to a divorce; then Sallie arrested Robert's hand, as he threatened and made a feint of asking the enamored old gentleman to give his attention to the following soliloquy:

The man who sets his heart upon a woman
Is a chameleon, and doth feed on air!
From air he takes his colors, holds his life,—
Changes with every wind,—grows lean or fat;
Rosy with hope, or green with jealousy,
Or pallid with despair—just as the gale
Varies from north to south—from heat to cold!
Oh, woman, woman! thou should'st have few sins
Of thine own to answer for! Thou art the author
Of such a book of follies in a man,
That it would need the tears of all the angels
To blot the record out!

Robert had watched the actions of the venerable gallant during this speech with evident interest, and saw that it had fallen unheeded upon his listless ear, and, turning to his companion, he remarked:

“It was like casting pearls before swine. The unfortunate old man is done for; he is as crazy as a loon, and a fit subject

For treason, stratagem, and spoils.”

To win her, he would, if she asked it, rob the corpse of his father, strangle his mother to get the gold plate from her false teeth, and lead his brother or sister to the gallows. When an old fellow like him falls into the clutches of an artful, designing young woman, he is more to be dreaded than a pack of hungry prairie wolves, or the wild beasts of the Coliseum. Its effect, at least, is fatal to all former friendship. God pity the deluded old creature! for she never will. It is the old story of the moth caught by glare

being enacted again; he will never know his danger until he loses the liberty of action."

When the play was ended, Lula Graham stopped in passing out to speak with Robert and Sallie, and invited them to meet a few friends at Belvoir on the next evening.

Julia heard the invitation, and manœuvred in vain to secure one for herself; but Lula was proof against her cunning wiles, and drew coldly back from the proffered kiss and cordial embrace which the treacherous girl was prepared to give in order to extort the coveted wish that she would compose one of the party.

Robert Carlton was an amused spectator of this interesting scene; and as Lula drew back with the grace and dignity of an empress from the heartless beauty, he could scarcely resist the impulse that prompted him to applaud with rapture the movement of righteous indignation on the part of the lovely orphan. After leaving the house with his companion, he remarked, laughingly :

"I suspect Miss Julia has learned a lesson this evening that will probably make a lasting impression, and cause her to look before she leaps into a lady's arms again. I am glad to find that Miss Lula had sufficient courage to administer that rebuke in public. It was a severe chastisement to the pride and dignity of the haughty girl, who will from henceforth proclaim *guerre à mort* against our gentle friend. If a few ladies would follow the example of Miss Lula, a cessation might be put to this abominable practice of promiscuous kissing in public. I have seen sober matrons, sentimental young ladies, and tiny school misses kiss apparently with genuine fondness, and then turn away and abuse each other as they would some pickpocket or hardened, impenitent convict."

"Oh, Robert, in mercy, do not suppose Julia Stanly to be a criterion of our sex!" was Sallie's reply.

"No, I acknowledge there are few exceptions; but still

there are many of the same type as herself. I believe the Bible mentions one woman out of whom seven devils were cast, and the supposition is that others of the sex were similarly afflicted."

"Take care: you are foiled by your own weapon; for the sacred book just alluded to speaks of a man who said his name was Legion—you know the rest. This would indicate a superior wickedness in the sterner sex."

The thought that Robert Carlton has witnessed with gratified pleasure this mortifying repulse, added to Julia's chagrin, and with flashing eyes and increased hatred toward her rival, she mentally exclaimed:

"The pauper may queen it over me awhile longer; but whether that story about her foreign lovers be true or false, her reign at Belvoir will soon be over, or my name is not Julia Stanly!"

CHAPTER XVIII.

Though fools spurn Hymen's gentle powers,
We, who improve his golden hours,
By sweet experience know
That marriage, rightly understood,
Gives to the tender and the good
A paradise below.

MR. CARLTON was waiting at the depot for Alice, who returned with young Herbert late in the afternoon of the day of Annie Sunderland's wedding.

The affectionate father folded his weary, heart-sick child to his bosom, while perfumed zephyrs fanned her pale face, and mocking-birds trilled forth their glad songs from the bowing trees, as if to welcome the exile back to her childhood's home.

Charlie was agreeably surprised on his return to find Mr. Gordon, whom he had frequently met in Europe, a guest at Belvoir.

Lula was with Annie, and no time was allowed for a *tête-à-tête* with his mother, and after a hasty toilet he left with the party for the wedding.

They arrived at Mr. Sunderland's just in time for Charlie to take his place as groomsman amid the brilliant *cortege*, which soon passed into the brightly illuminated parlors.

The rustle of footsteps was heard on the India matting, and down the vista of open rooms, "snowy draperies, like fleecy clouds in the distance," were seen approaching, as Dr. Hall arose and stood in the center of that airy suite of parlors, which were redolent with sweet flowers.

The *cortege* formed a semicircle around him, and after

an affectionate address, and a solemn, impressive prayer, which drew tears from the eyes of many, he pronounced "Dr. Henry Clinton and Annie Sunderland husband and wife."

The soft lace veil was thrown back, and exposed the sweet blushing face of the bride, radiant with delicate loveliness.

Congratulations were showered upon the bridal pair from every quarter, and the noisy hum of pleasant voices soon produced delightful confusion in the rooms.

Miss Clinton, the doctor's sister, a stylish, interesting-looking girl, and a stranger to the company, had been assigned to the care of Charlie Herbert, consequently it was some time before he could leave her to speak with his friends.

Finally, other gentlemen were introduced to the lady, and just then an agreeable smile and bow of recognition from Lula, who stood on the opposite side of the room, conversing with Mr. Gordon, attracted our hero's attention. He was crossing the floor to speak with her, when Julia Stanly appeared suddenly before him, and adroitly dropped her fan.

She had watched him with that keenness of vision peculiar to the hawk, when about to pounce upon its victim, gradually contracting her circular movements until a fit opportunity occurred for securing and taking possession of the prize.

Ostensibly, she appeared to be leaving the room, but in reality her object was to attract his notice.

As he stooped for the fan, she remarked:

"Ah, Mr. Herbert! I am delighted to welcome you home again. I find the heat of the parlor somewhat oppressive, and was about seeking the fresh air."

He offered his arm—a promenade on the front gallery was proposed, and acceded to.

Charlie was not at all averse to be entertained by the cheerful gossip of this dark-eyed Georgian, glorious in the wealth of her regal charms.

As they stepped out on the veranda, he said :

"Miss Julia, the reception of your photograph was an agreeable surprise to me in New York. It has been a constant reminder of your generous sympathy."

"As I intended it should be," she replied.

While they walked to and fro before the open window, his watchful eye continually sought one bright, particular divinity, who was arrayed in a gauzy robe of virgin white, with a rich circlet of pearls around her lovely neck, which rivaled them in purity. She stood with graceful composure and queenly dignity beside Mr. Gordon, the aristocratic young Englishman, who looked with intense admiration into her dark-blue eyes. Other admirers approached her also, with as much respect as loyal subjects would their sovereign. Yet Alfred was not among them.

"What could this truant knight be thinking of, to expose his peerless *fiancee* so long to the admiration of that handsome stranger?" thought Charlie, and he vainly sought among the assembly for the missing lover.

Mr. Herbert soon came to the rescue, and said :

"Charlie, I cannot allow you to monopolize Miss Stanly any longer, for I desire to introduce her to my young friend, Mr. Gordon;" then to Julia he observed smilingly: "You cannot object to making his acquaintance, Miss Stanly, as he is handsome, wealthy, and wise, besides being one of the noblemen of his native land."

He drew her hand within his arm, and they walked into the house.

Charlie followed in their rear, and soon clasped, with genuine affection, the hand of Lula, who said :

"Oh, Charlie! I am so glad to see you; so glad that you came in time for the ceremony. I have been harassed

by a hundred fears that some accident would prevent your reaching here at the appointed time."

Her voice was so artlessly sweet that he was convinced of her sincerity.

"And I am so happy to meet you, Birdie."

He spoke with more real pleasure than he had experienced for weeks.

But some painful memory soon appeared to cast a shadow over his cheerful face. He had striven to take an unselfish view of her engagement with Raymond, and to maintain toward her that fraternal love which had ever characterized his intercourse with her, but his efforts were in vain; yet he determined to conceal the rebellious emotions of his heart, and meet her as a brother should after so long an absence.

In an agitated voice he asked:

"Where is Raymond, Lula? I have not seen him to-night."

He waited in breathless silence for her reply, but none came. The little hand which had rested lightly on his arm pressed more heavily, and he saw her cheeks suddenly pale beneath his gaze.

At last she gasped, in scarcely audible tones:

"Don't ask me, Charlie; he has gone—I know not where."

As painful as this brief reply was to her, it sent a thrill of joy, with electric speed, through his heart. It was to him the "elixir of life." Happiness might return, and radiant hope was weaving sweet garlands of peace for the future.

He pressed her hand silently, and said:

"Come with me on the veranda, Birdie; this room is too crowded and warm for you."

He led her through the open window, and scarcely waited for her flowing train to clear the low sill before he asked, in tremulous tones:

"Birdie, are you engaged to Alfred Raymond?"

"Why, Charlie, certainly not."

Her truthful eyes were filled with wonder and amazement as she looked up to his face.

Just then Robert Carlton suddenly appeared before them, and said:

"Ah, Miss Lula! don't think to elude my vigilant eye by hiding beneath this vine-clad bower! I saw Charlie lead you out, and came to frustrate his design by claiming a fulfillment of your promise to sing that exquisite air from Flotow's opera of Martha, 'M'Appari-Tutt-Amor.'"

"Wait a few moments, Carlton. The heat was rather oppressive in the parlors, and I brought her out to breathe the pure air. Besides, you should remember that this is the first time I have seen or spoken with her since my return," remarked Charlie.

"Nonsense, Herbert! The parlors are delightfully cool. See how the sweet south wind, laden with the perfume of a thousand flowers, comes through the open windows, and wafts those richly-wrought lace curtains to and fro. In answer to your last objection, you have only to look, and see that she is well and as charming as ever. 'Veni, vidi, vici,' is written on her brow; and that proud, aristocratic young Englishman is as ready and willing as any of our backwoods gentry to throw himself at her feet."

"Hush, Robert! I will comply with your request immediately, in order to check this absurd flattery," she said, taking his arm and walking away.

Julia Stanly was standing with Mr. Gordon near the piano, when Lula took her seat before the instrument—and Robert noted the look of withering scorn which the proud beauty cast upon the gentle girl—and said, laughingly:

"Miss Stanly, you have wounded a great many silly fellows' hearts, but until you number music among your

accomplishments you cannot be a successful man-killer. I have heard it said that when the negroes of Madeira wish to catch lizards they always accompany the chase by whistling some tune, which has the effect of drawing great numbers to them. I could tell you of venomous serpents being charmed by the voice of a siren, and if the small animals are affected by the magic of music, you cannot wonder at its fatal power on the hearts of men."

Julia felt herself at the mercy of her tormentor, therefore wisely concluded to smother her wrath, and mildly replied:

"I regret exceedingly my deficiency in that respect, but really it requires so much time and patience to become a proficient in the delightful art, that I decided long since to abandon it, and devoted my leisure hours to something more practical."

"Your decision is truly commendable, and accords with your well-known utilitarian ideas," was Robert's ironical reply.

Here this amusing by-play was interrupted by the sweet rippling notes of the prelude from the piano, which instantly produced a lull throughout the gay and cheerful party.

Julia again plead the heat of the room, and Mr. Gordon courteously accompanied the artful beauty out into the open air.

When Charlie was left alone he turned to gaze on the starlit heavens, and to analyze the tumultuous joy that was throbbing in his breast, as he listened to the enchanting melody of Lula's voice. Louder and louder grew the strain, until the whole atmosphere seemed full of delicious sounds. "Like an exhalation of rich distilled perfume," it rose higher and higher, until his fancy bore it beyond the skies, where angels caught the sweet strain,—

And God lends his ear, well pleased to hear.

Alone in the starlight, bright random thoughts of a conflicting nature dashed rapidly through his mind.

"Not engaged to Raymond! Oh, what joy!"

What peace now reigned in his heart! But why? Could she ever be more than a sister to him? He remembered her own admission, which was repeated to him by Julia Stanly, had placed this question beyond the shadow of a doubt.

He fell again into the "slough of despond."

Yet Julia had said that Lula was betrothed; and he asked himself: "Could the beautiful girl possibly have spoken falsely in uttering those words also which had pierced his heart as a barbed arrow?"

This suspicion of her veracity came with lightning-force upon his doubting mind, and caused his spirits to mount immediately above zero; and the memory of Dr. Hall's examination, and Raymond's suspicions of Julia's treachery toward Lula at that time, suddenly arose like a taunting specter before him, and he stood appalled as he thought of being duped by the artful girl.

He was aroused from his reverie by voices near him, and soon recognized the presence of Mr. Gordon and Miss Stanly—then heard the former remark:

"What an exquisite voice Miss Graham has! for power and sweetness I have never heard it surpassed by an amateur."

"Yes, she sings well, but one could expect nothing less from the daughter of a music teacher."

"What! Miss Graham the daughter of a music teacher!" cried Mr. Gordon, in amazement. "Surely, Miss Stanly, you mistake. She has nothing of the plebeian in her appearance. Perhaps you have been misinformed in regard to her descent."

"No, indeed! I know her well. Her mother was quite poor, and unable to pay her board—she died, and left her

child to work out the debt. Mrs. Herbert found her occupying a servant's position in some obscure family, and after paying the mother's bills, the good lady was allowed to take the child, and I believe has adopted her. More than this I cannot say—of her ancestry I know nothing, nor does any one else; but the young lady is tolerated and admitted into society on account of the Herberts," was Miss Julia's contemptuous reply.

Charlie's ears were opened, the scales had fallen from his eyes, and he saw that her magnificent form concealed the black heart of a fiend.

Stepping from beneath the shadow of the vine which had concealed him from their sight, he approached her, every nerve quivering with suppressed anger, and said :

"Miss Stanly, allow me to enlighten you in regard to the history of Miss Lula Graham. Her mother was an accomplished and handsome woman, the belle of Charleston, South Carolina, until her marriage with Mr. Graham, a prominent merchant of that city; and her father, Mr. Wilmot, was among the most wealthy and influential men of that State. My mother was an orphan, who was reared in his house as a child of his own, and as a sister of Mrs. Graham. I know of no one who has reason to be prouder of her ancestry than has Lula Graham. They were all noble men and women, without a stain upon their escutcheons. Furthermore, she is heiress to a handsome estate, independent of my father, who claims her by love and adoption."

Then, after a pause, he continued :

"I imagined these facts were well known in the community, but it appears that I was mistaken as regards Miss Stanly, her professed friend."

Then bowing, he entered the house a wiser man than when he left it.

Julia was overwhelmed with shame and confusion, and

the following thoughts revolved in the mind of the crest-fallen girl :

"Oh! would that the earth could have opened and swallowed me before that base falsehood blackened my heart in his presence! Oh, hateful tongue! I could almost wrench you from my throat for giving vent to such envious, malicious lies before him—for blasting my cherished hopes of reigning over Belvoir. Oh! curses on the head of that baby-faced creature, who is continually tempting me to sin, which is followed by open shame!"

But she determined to conceal her chagrin from the handsome stranger, and with a careless toss of her head, said :

"I am very sorry Mr. Herbert heard my remarks, but I told the tale as it was told to me. There is no doubt about Mrs. Graham having been a music teacher in this city,—hundreds can testify to the fact, though I will not pretend to unravel the mystery. He cannot deny, however, that Lula is an accomplished coquette, Mr. Gordon, and my advice to you is :

Beware of her smile, for many a wile
Lies hid in the smile of Miss Graham."

"Forewarned is forearmed. I am fully aware of my perilous position, yet am not able to decide whether I shall be in greater danger from the soft eye of blue or the brilliant black, which says :

Come and worship my ray,
By adoring perhaps you may move me,"

he replied, pleasantly, bowing to her.

Then the *brilliant blacks* darted a lightning glance toward him, of such splendor that it might have tempted a cowed monk to forsake his cloister, with forbidden thoughts of Cupid and Hymen.

Oh what a depth of witchcraft lies
In the small orb!

As they continued their promenade, Mr. Gordon remarked:

"I know of no man who has a surer prospect of happiness before him than Dr. Clinton. Just see with what a proud, contented look he watches the graceful movements of his lovely bride! Her bright, cheerful, spiritual face will prove a certain panacea for the ills of domestic life and an antidote for every trouble. To me she appears

A perfect woman, nobly plann'd,
To warn, to comfort, and command;
And yet a spirit still and bright,
With something of an angel light."

"I think she seems no less satisfied with her choice," said Julia.

"Marriage is regarded in society as a lottery, but I should imagine that she had drawn a prize of immense value, for Dr. Clinton is a noble-looking man, and one of sterling worth, I judge, whom neither temptation nor ridicule could sway from the path of duty. Miss Stanly, you must observe that I am a firm believer in the science of physiognomy; but excuse me, I weary you with this catalogue of your friends' virtues, which of course is nothing new to you," he said, as he noticed her abstraction.

"Not at all, I am all attention."

Still doubting the sincerity of her assertion, Mr. Gordon sought to amuse his companion, and said:

"Speaking of marriage as a lottery, I am reminded of a certain handsome Irish friend of mine, who was the owner of a very slim purse, and no prospect ahead except a tedious term of service in the army during a long interval of peace. One evening, at a crowded assembly, where he was a general favorite, he bewailed his unhappy condition in serio-

comical tones, and offered himself as a grand prize in a lottery of five thousand tickets. The novelty of the scheme created quite a sensation among the belles, and tickets were in great demand. Some bought a half dozen or more. A pretty little heiress, who engaged in the wild freak for amusement, drew the prize. Thereupon young Patrick threw himself at her feet and vowed eternal allegiance; and Cupid hurled a dart from his bright, pleading eyes into the fair lady's heart, and they twain became one flesh, and, so far as the world knows, have never repented of their reckless game of chance."

"Perhaps they were contented with their lot, but I think no prudent and sagacious woman should submit her prospect for future peace and bliss to mere chance," said Julia.

Before the close of the evening Robert Carlton offered his heart and hand to Lula Graham.

Lula was in despair. Her first *affaire d'amour* was one of painful, bitter remembrance, and she feared and trembled at the thought of another. She refused him gently but firmly.

He did not urge his suit with the frantic desperation of Alfred, but yielded at once to her decision, replying, sadly:

"You are right, Lula, I am indeed unworthy of you. Let us remain friends forever."

"Oh, Robert! you can never find a better or a stancher friend than your little playmate will ever be to you," she exclaimed, with great fervor.

Poor Robert appreciated the kindness of the gentle girl in wishing to soothe his mortification, and endeavored to conceal from her the terrible wound that his sensitive nature had received.

He wrapped the soft shawl carefully around her, and followed her to the carriage, then pressing the little hand, he bade her "good night" as tenderly and cheerfully as he would have done his sister.

He watched her until the carriage was out of sight, and turned with a sigh and aching heart in another direction—away from home.

Lula went on her way rejoicing in the thought that Robert Carlton was content to remain forever her sincere and esteemed friend.

During that midnight drive to Belvoir Mr. Gordon was enthusiastic in expressing his admiration of the beautiful array of grace and fashion which had greeted him in this republican land, where true merit formed its aristocracy. He saw that although every lady was a queen she bore her regal honors with meekness and grace; and observed among the gentlemen, genuine specimens of nature's noblemen, that courtly pomp and display, which attract the attention and gratify the fancy of travelers in continental Europe as well as in his own loved island, were counterbalanced by the tasteful and beautiful arrangement characteristic of Southern hospitality.

CHAPTER XIX.

• Father of Light! great God of Heaven!
 Hear'st thou the accents of despair?
 Can guilt like man's be e'er forgiven?
 Can vice atone for crimes by prayer?
 Father of Light! on thee I call!
 Thou see'st my soul is dark within;
 Thou who can'st mark the sparrow's fall,
 Avert from me the death of sin.

INSTEAD of returning to his home on that memorable night after the wedding, Robert Carlton sought refuge in one of those fashionable drinking saloons, earth's pandemonium,

The high capital
 Of Satan and his peers,

where the young, thoughtless, and gay, the heart-sick and world-weary, are enticed to seek oblivion from its sparkling fountains, and

Drink night away
 Till rising dawn.

The history of these fashionable dens of modern civilization is written in blood, and no other institution has entailed so much misery on society. There the affectionate husband, son, and brother imbibe the fatal poison of domestic happiness, which converts the quiet home into an earthly purgatory. There the deadly stab is often given to honor and reputation. The *habitué* of these luxurious resorts finds it necessary to partake of the tempting ruby or amber-colored liquors before each meal, and returns peevish and discontented to a pleasant home, where a lov-

ing wife and bright, joyous little ones have eagerly watched his coming. But, alas! their fond caresses are embittered by the odor of strong waters, and words of endearment are met by him with fierce and bitter reproaches. Then, discontented and unhappy, this man, who was fashioned after God's image, returns to the tempter, until self-respect is lost, and he mingles only with degraded companions. Reputation suffers, public esteem is withdrawn, and the hopeless inebriate, after a course of folly and sinfulness, sinks into an untimely grave, unloved and unregretted, entailing misery, penury, and want upon innocent children, who will blush for the tarnished name of their father. Nor are the evils confined to them alone, but entire families are made to suffer from this selfish indulgence. Devoted parents, who fondly hoped that the noble boy, whom they had reared with vigilant care, would become the staff and support of their declining years; the sisters, who had watched with pure and disinterested pride the expansion of his intellect, anticipating for him a brilliant career of usefulness; the blushing bride, who had sundered every tie that bound her to her childhood's home, trusting to the promise that he would love and cherish her, have all seen their hopes blighted by the intoxicating liquids which flow from these fountains of Bacchus.

There the unhappy, unwary Robert Carlton was waited upon by the obsequious attendant of the saloon, and soon was partially under the influence of the tempter.

Some frivolous remarks passed between himself and an inmate of the house of the name of Harper, and immediately afterward abusive language and high-sounding words were bandied.

Harper was completely under the influence of the "riotous god," but Robert's reason had not entirely deserted him, and he endeavored to effect an honorable retreat. But his

antagonist refused to let him escape, and followed him into the street with a loaded pistol.

Harper's friends finally induced him to return to the house, and used every argument in their power to convince him that no insult was offered by young Carlton, but it was all in vain.

The suspicious agrarian swore vengeance against his adversary, and said: "I will have the blood of that purse-proud aristocrat yet."

As Robert strolled leisurely along the deserted streets he was surprised to see Harper approaching him from the opposite direction, with his hand grasping a pistol within his bosom, and a loathing, vindictive scowl darkening his brow.

Robert betrayed no emotion, but walked on, and fearlessly met him.

As they passed each other Harper's unsteady hand drew his weapon, and it flashed before the eyes of Carlton.

He was in the act of firing a second time when Robert instinctively drew his pistol and fired with deliberate aim.

The ball entered the unfortunate man's shoulder, and he fell wounded.

Robert gazed horror-stricken on the deed he had committed, and was about kneeling to soothe the suffering his own hand had caused, when a coarse but friendly voice called out:

"Fly, Mr. Carlton! fly! the blood-hounds of the law will soon be on your track. To the river! to the river—quick! You served him right, for he is a meddling, hot-headed fellow; but be quick—I'll see you safe across the river."

Robert recognized the voice of Mr. Jones, an honest man and faithful friend, and saw the necessity of following his advice at once; and they walked off hurriedly to the river.

The report of fire-arms soon attracted a crowd to the spot, and among them was a friend of Harper, who had followed him from the saloon, hoping to prevent a difficulty, but unfortunately was too remote from the scene of action to interfere.

Notwithstanding the crowd and excitement, young Carlton with his friend passed the policemen unmolested, and effected his escape.

Some one who had gone to Harper's assistance remarked:

"This is a mortal wound, and young Carlton must not be allowed to escape punishment."

"It was a d——d cowardly act, for he fired after Harper passed," said another.

"Yes, that is plainly seen, for the wound is back of the shoulder," cried a third.

"Why don't they arrest the murderer?" exclaimed several voices—and the excitement and confusion usually attendant upon such a catastrophe were manifested throughout the crowd.

Still nobody ventured to pursue him.

The suffering man was carried to his home, and the house was soon filled with sounds of weeping, lamentation, and wee, for the unfortunate husband and father.

The surgeons were called in—they examined the wound, and, after a grave and lengthy consultation, decided that the ball must be extracted. This was accordingly done; but, alas! the wounded man sunk under the operation.

Toward the close of the next day he breathed his last.

Then the excitement among his friends became intense to arrest the murderer. Their revenge called for his immediate execution under the code of Judge Lynch, rather than await the slow process of the common law.

But their intended victim could not be found.

Scouts were sent out in every direction, rewards were offered, but without effect.

The unfortunate Robert, who had only obeyed the first law of nature in protecting himself, was more sinned against than sinning, in the commission of the awful deed; and now with a broken heart and contrite spirit, was a wanderer far from his native home.

"Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us."

It was thus that some of the dead man's friends prayed night and morning, at the family altar and in the house of God on the Sabbath. Then rising, they would go out on the thoroughfares, and eagerly inquire, with brutal vengeance in their hearts, "If there were any tidings of Carlton, the murderer?"

That poor storm-tossed wanderer, who, only to spare the feelings of his high-minded father and heart-broken mother, had consented to fly from the cruel wrath of his persecutors.

Oh, ye Pharisees! take care; that prayer is an abomination in the sight of the Lord. He will reject it with abhorrence unless you will freely forgive.

"For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."

* * * * *

On the morning after the unfortunate occurrence alluded to, as the family at Belvoir lingered over their late breakfast, in pleasant conversation respecting events which took place at the bridal reception, the door-bell announced a visitor.

A servant appeared, and handed Charlie a note, saying: "An immediate answer is requested."

Young Herbert glanced hastily at its contents and turned pale; then leaping from his chair, said quickly:

"Robert, order my horse immediately."

After the servant left the room, Charlie said:

"Father, let me speak with you."

Father and son left the apartment together, leaving the others trembling with doubt and anxiety in regard to the contents of the mysterious missive.

The letter was from Robert Carlton, informing his friend of the sad affair, which would probably brand the writer as a murderer.

The unhappy young man begged that Charlie would come to him immediately, and that Mr. Herbert would go to Mr. Carlton and give a true version of the matter. He wrote:

"Let Mr. Herbert say to my dear parents, that I do solemnly declare before God and man, that up to the moment when this deed was committed, I had no thought of malice, much less of murder, in my heart, although I had borne so much from this man, only that I might spare their loving hearts sorrow and trouble.

"But when he approached, I saw him grasp some concealed weapon, and fix his eyes on me with deadly hatred. I instinctively seized my own pistol, and turned to look after him as he passed. Just then he fired, and his murderous weapon flashed before my eyes.

"O father! O mother! forgive your son; could human nature stand more? Could any one with the least spark of manhood resist the first law of nature in attempting to defend himself? While his pistol was again pointed at my breast I fired—and he fell."

The letter continued:

"Father—mother—I know you will credit the statement of your unhappy boy; for he has never told you a falsehood. I would freely give my life if I could restore Harper to his family. But for your sake I will not surrender myself into the hands of an excited populace, otherwise I

would be utterly indifferent as to the result, for the charms of life have departed forever."

Mrs. Herbert was taken into the confidence of her husband and son, and hastily dispatched each one on his special mission.

Charlie was attended by Robert's trusty messenger, and Mr. Herbert proceeded to announce the sad tidings to Mr. Carlton, his friend and neighbor.

Unpleasant rumors usually travel with telegraphic speed; hence Mr. Herbert was not surprised to find the family overwhelmed with grief and anxiety, and in the utmost consternation for the safety of their son. Extravagant accounts of the difficulty had reached them the previous night, and the afflicted parents were almost frantic with fears that he might be arrested by a furious mob.

Mr. Herbert immediately quieted their anxiety, and assured them that their boy was entirely beyond danger for the present; and furthermore informed them that he could not be arrested unless a requisition was made on the governor of another State. This of course would require some time, and ere it could be done Robert's location could be changed to one of entire safety.

Mr. Carlton grasped the hand of his kind neighbor, and exclaimed fervently:

"God bless you, my friend! You have indeed brought comfort to an afflicted family."

Then, after reading Robert's letter, he handed it to his weeping wife, and said:

"Dear, noble boy! the act does not criminate him, unless his heart was guilty. Let others say what they may, I know him to be innocent; for the youth who never allowed a falsehood to sully his lips, would not condescend to act the part of an assassin," and added: "Cheer up, my dear wife, drive back your tears, we have good reason to be proud of our son, who would suffer a thousand

deaths rather than perjure himself. If I were asked the dwelling-place of truth, I would point to the heart of Robert Carlton, notwithstanding Democritus feigns that she lies at the bottom of a well."

Mrs. Carlton, after reading a portion of the letter, clasped her hands, and with tears streaming down her face, ejaculated:

"My child is innocent!"

When quiet was restored to the household, and the alarm with regard to Robert's safety had somewhat subsided, Mr. Carlton remarked:

"My dear friend, I do not intend that Robert shall be a wanderer over the face of the earth, with the mark of Cain indelibly stamped upon his noble brow for envious tongues and wicked hearts to wreak their venomous darts against; but he must come forward like an honest, upright man should do, and demand justice at the hands of his fellow-citizens. The laws of the country will free his honor and his name from every stain, and place him above the reproach of his enemies. When this excitement is quelled, I shall order him to return and surrender himself to the legal authorities."

Mr. Herbert agreed that this was the wisest plan; but cautioned his friend not to reveal his intention until time should soften the exasperated feelings of the multitude, and Robert's friends could produce sufficient evidence to prove that the deed was done in self-defense.

Mr. Herbert afterward found that the community generally were highly incensed and prejudiced against young Carlton, on account of the position of Harper's wound, which led to suspicion of treachery and cowardice. Unfortunately, no evidence besides Robert's statement could be found to refute the serious charge. This, indeed, was sufficient to justify the act in the estimation of his immediate friends; but Mr. Herbert was well aware that it

would avail nothing before a jury when circumstantial evidence bore so strongly against a prisoner.

Notwithstanding every effort was made by this able jurist and his compeers to substantiate their belief in its being a case of justifiable homicide, the sad affair still remained in *statu quo*; and poor Robert was left to roam with a heavy heart, friendless and alone, in a distant land.

His father's silver-threaded locks, and once proud, manly step, began to show evidence "that hope deferred, maketh the heart sick;" and the gentle mother's pale cheeks were growing paler and thinner day by day, while Alice's sad face seldom brightened with a smile. Yet she was untiring in her efforts to administer comfort to the afflicted parents, who thanked God for restoring to them their beloved daughter in this dark and gloomy hour of trial.

But such are the consequences to him who indulges in wine or strong drink. He will find that at last "it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder."

In relating this sad event and contemplating its unhappy result, we are reminded of the everyday practice of carrying concealed weapons. Though statute after statute has been enacted against it, no good effect has resulted. The entire community constitutes one vast armory; almost every man violates the laws of the land in this respect. And though during the existence of war, or when in a revolution every one deems his person exposed to the violence of an enraged mob, such a course of conduct might be approved and justified, we cannot but deplore it as an evil that in time of peace, when communities are quiet and their members are pursuing their daily avocations for support, that this practice should be indulged. Many a time, simple quarrels and misunderstandings between individuals would pass off with a blow, or a bruised eye or cheek, and the peace and quietude of a neighborhood suffer no further disturbance, were it not that deadly weapons are brought

into requisition—the death of one or the other party ensues, and untold misery is brought upon a once happy and peaceful household. It is to be hoped that the refining and holy influence of Christianity, if nothing else, will effect a cessation of this barbarous habit, and bring men to a just appreciation of the divine injunction, "Thou shalt not kill."

CHAPTER XX.

Oh, come to the South, 'tis the home of the heart—
No sky like its own can deep passion impart;
The glow of its summer is felt in the soul,
And love keepeth ever his fervent control.
Oh, here would thy beauty most brilliantly beam,
And life pass away like some delicate dream;
Each wish of thy heart should realized be,
And this beautiful land seem an Eden to thee.

"LULA, here is a volume of poetry which Charlie requested me to give you, but I had quite forgotten it until this moment," said Mrs. Herbert, entering the room, and interrupting a conversation between that young lady and Mr. Gordon.

The book was received with evident pleasure, and Mrs. Herbert left the apartment.

After examining the title, Lula turned the book, and it suddenly opened itself, disclosing to her astonished gaze a beautiful photograph of Julia Stanly. Her dark, bright eyes, soft as moonlight waters, were turned to the opposite page, as if heart answered to heart in the fond confession there recorded.

The orphan sickened, as the painful truth of Charlie's love for Julia forced itself upon her, while reading the following lines:

Do I love thee?—ask the flowers
If they love the breath of spring,—
Ask them if the morning hours
Fragrant dew and freshness bring,—
List their answer!—Such to me
Is the love I feel for thee.

Do I love thee?—If devotion
Be of love the surest test,—
If the rivers love the ocean,
Drawn by instinct to its breast,—
Then my heart in homage see,
All its currents flow to thee.

Mr. Gordon watched Lula's varying countenance as she read, and asked:

"What envied bard is he, whose rhythm can stir such deep emotions in your heart, Miss Graham, causing the lily to usurp the rose's place upon your cheek?"

"Oh! it is a delightful volume of 'Songs and Poems of the South,' by Meek, of Alabama, and they will naturally strike a sympathetic chord in the bosom of every true-hearted Southerner. He sings of our Sunny Land,—its brilliant skies—its charming scenery, and its sweet flowers; with a truth and purity that almost persuades me that I have a personal-interest in them."

She closed the book and held it firmly in her hand, then added:

"Some of his poems have been widely circulated over fictitious names, and one of them, entitled *Balakiava*, won an extensive reputation, and was attributed by many to Alexander Smith, one of your British poets."

He drew near to examine the book; but she retreated a few steps, and said:

"If you will excuse me for a few moments, Mr. Gordon, I will go and speak to my aunt, then return and submit the volume to your inspection."

Lula left the room, and taking the photograph from the book, handed it to Mrs. Herbert, saying:

"Dear auntie, I think that Charlie must have forgotten he had added a tenth Muse to the little volume when he directed you to present it to me—therefore I have taken the liberty of dissolving her connection with the faithful

nine, for fear that she might share the fate of the conceited Thamyris, who presumed to challenge the Muses to sing and was defeated; then deprived of his harp and his eyes. I have brought the picture to you, because I thought you would not like for Mr. Gordon to find it in Charlie's possession."

Mrs. Herbert received the photograph, and at once recognized the likeness. An indignant flush arose to her face, and she inquired:

"What singular infatuation possesses the boy, Lula? I cannot comprehend his actions. I have been frequently annoyed recently by hearing of his engagement with this girl, and some of our friends speak of her as my son's beautiful *fiancee*; but I suppose with such convincing proof as this before me, I must submit to further annoyances, and let Madame Rumor bandy his name with pleasure."

Lula turned with a smothered sigh, thinking that she, too, had seen and heard enough to convince her that the gossiping dame had not heralded this connection without good foundation.

On re-entering the parlor she offered the book to Mr. Gordon, then seated herself, with some light fancy work in her hands, at a distance from him, hoping that he would examine the poems and leave her to reflection.

He very soon put the volume aside, and remarked:

"Books are a great comfort in solitude, a solace in sickness and sorrow. Hood, our prince of punsters, while an invalid, writes: 'That when his physicians condemned him, like Sancho Panza, to Lenten fare, denying him all animal food, as well as all fluids stronger than that which lays dust, he still had a feast of reason and a flow of soul. Denied beef, he had *Butter* and *Cowper*; forbidden mutton, he had *Lamb*; and in lieu of pork, the great *Bacon* and *Hogg*.' Such philosophy may do in cases of

emergency, but in the present instance I greatly prefer an oral entertainment."

Lula observed :

"I think authors can be best appreciated when read in certain localities. Fred Saunders says: 'Milton should be perused in some old cathedral, whose dim, religious light will harmonize with the lofty and sublime musings of the great Christian poet; take Wordsworth by the margin of some rippling stream or lake, with mountains in the horizon and caroling birds overhead; Scott should be read in an apartment hung with relics of the feudal ages; to sympathize with Byron, seat yourself on a rock by the sea-shore when the sky looks wild and stormy; it is only Shakespeare who can be read and enjoyed at all times and all places, for all things have inspired his universal genius.' I think these Poems of the South should be read in some sweet-scented grove, where the 'mock-bird's melody rings beneath cloudless skies'"

"I will take a copy with me to merry Old England, and while reading it shall be reminded of my delightful sojourn in this land of flowers, where crystal streams flow beneath forests of perpetual green, and luscious fruits ripen and perfect as they did in the garden of Eden.

"I have been quite a rover for one of my years—over the white cliffs, mountains, and valleys of my native land, through the Emerald Isle, and over Scotland's hills and dells; I have seen Helvetia's flowery fields and icy mountains, the vine-clad hills of France, and classical Italy, with its glowing skies—yet none have equaled this bright and beautiful sunny land, where the grace and beauty of its daughters are surpassed by those of no other clime."

"You are complimentary indeed, Mr. Gordon, but having never passed beyond the limits of my native land, I am utterly unable to discuss this subject with you, although

I am perfectly willing to believe that the sunny South, the home of my heart, is the most favored on the globe."

"You must know, Miss Graham, that I have always been prejudiced in favor of the United States, and particularly the South, for my mother was born and reared beneath its brilliant skies, and her loving heart still fondly clings to her native home. She is now, beyond doubt, the most beautiful and fascinating woman in England, at least this is the opinion of my father and his children. She partially prepared me for the pleasures which awaited me in the New World, but I find that the half was not told, so greatly has every expectation been surpassed."

After a short pause, he continued:

"If I could follow the example of my father and transplant one of these bright-eyed daughters of the South to Albion's distant shores, it would be very gratifying to my parents, and establish my happiness for the remainder of life."

As Mr. Gordon concluded, his gaze rested on the lovely girl in a manner that plainly indicated a wish and desire to make the experiment.

Just then the large white petals of a magnolia fell over and around Lula from the vase above.

She stopped to pick them up, and holding them in her hand, said:

"Mr. Gordon, has tradition ever informed you that the youths and maidens of this flowery land communicate their loves to each other by means of these fragrant tablets? They trace with some sharp-pointed instrument their hopes and wishes on the mystic leaf, and confide it to *Æolus*, who bears the perfumed missive safely to its destination. The words written upon it are at first scarcely discernible, but they soon appear in bold relief, and remain legible, even when the petal grows dark and crisp from age."

"Perhaps the trusty god has wafted you a *billet d'amour*. Do let me examine the airy mail. Though a novice in the arts of Flora, you will find me an apt and faithful scholar," he smilingly said, coming forward.

Charlie had gathered the flower early in the morning, before his departure, and given it to her. In collecting the scattered petals, her watchful eye had detected certain cabalistic characters on one of them, and instinct caused her to place them in her work-basket for further inspection. Though her quick reply was:

"Oh, no! that flower has been here a week or more. It was only half blown when it was placed there, and this morning, when I replenished the vases, it still looked fresh, and I allowed it to remain."

Mr. Sunderland and Harry called just then, greatly to Lula's relief. Mr. Herbert was summoned from his library, and conversation became general.

After the usual compliments were exchanged, Mr. Sunderland said:

"Well, Mr. Gordon, how does this bright, sunny land compare with foggy Old England? I suppose you must have left it in winter, when there was

No sun—no moon!

No morn—no noon—

No dawn—no dusk—no proper time of day—

No sky—no earthly view—

No distance looking blue—

No roads—no streets—no t'other side the way!"

"I did leave it very much in the condition you have described, sir,—when the fog was so thick that it seemed as if one might have cut his way through with a knife," was the laughing reply.

Then he added:

"But at this season of the year, it will compare as favorably with the young Republic as sturdy manhood would with promising youth; England is now in her glory: presenting the appearance of one vast landscape-garden, under the highest state of cultivation. Vegetation is as far advanced as it is here, but it will be much longer in maturing. This country surpasses ours in natural beauties—its forests are larger, and of a brighter green—the trees taller, more graceful and feathery—the air clearer, and much higher perfumed—and the landscapes more distinct."

"I have observed in European paintings that the trees—roots, trunks, and branches—were of a sturdy John Bull form and stature. But our ladies—God bless our noble women!—how do they rank with Anglo-Saxon beauties?" asked Mr. Sunderland.

"Ah! there I must yield you the palm again. I have seldom seen your ladies equaled, and they are not to be surpassed. The rosy, healthy beauties of Great Britain cannot match the delicate features and ethereal grace of American women."

"Well, give me your hand, Mr. Gordon, for you are the first sensible Englishman that I have seen for many a day. They usually come to us with their eyes jaundiced; thinking that 'nothing good can come out of Nazareth,' but you have given honor where honor was due."

Harry Sunderland said:

"Mr. Gordon, I should like to know your impression of the pic-nic that you attended last week, as I believe those moonlight festivals are institutions peculiar to the Sunny South."

"Oh, it was gloriously beautiful! I felt as I ascended the hill, with the fire-flies, like Fairy torch bearers, flying about me, that I had entered enchanted ground; and

where the lofty trees interlaced their branches overhead, sheltering the platform on which the joyous revelers with merry feet kept time to the inspiriting strains of the orchestra, it appeared like nature's royal saloon, in which were assembled her noblest knights and fairest ladies for a contest of beauty. The splendor of the scene bewildered me for a few moments—then my eyes became riveted on the exquisite fairy-like forms, who glided through the dance as gracefully as a curl of smoke from the amber pipe of a turbaned Turk, or the thistle down which floats over the hills and dales of Scotland. I never saw the rôle of poetry of motion so perfectly portrayed as by those Southern maidens. The full moon threw a silvery phosphoric light over meadows and fields, but the dancers seemed to float in a golden mist, as the glare from the bonfires of rich Southern pine, and the light of a hundred hanging lamps, threw their gorgeous radiance over the scene."

Mr. Herbert said:

"As Harry has remarked, these moonlight festivals are, I believe, peculiar to the South. The heat of the sun during the day is intense, though the nights are often cool and exhilarating. The moon casts a bright and lovely light over the landscape, and the shadows of the surrounding objects dart about and play with each other in a manner truly gay and attractive. It is during these seasons that the young assemble in high glee, and each Benedick and Beatrice play their part to perfection. The merry dance is indulged, promenades enjoyed, and candies, nuts, fruits, ice-creams, sherbets, and cakes contribute to the gayety and pleasure of the evening."

Mr. Sunderland proposed that Messrs. Herbert and Gordon should accompany him in a ride, as he wished to see what progress the workmen were making with Dr.

Clinton's house. The proposition was accepted, and the merry old gentleman then added:

"I know, Mr. Gordon, that the English are generally famous equestrians—even your ladies excel in this accomplishment, and can sit on horseback, stand fire, and leap a ditch or hedge as fearlessly as any veteran cavalryman. I remember to have read an amusing anecdote in some old review of Lady Mary Pierrepont, who afterward became Lady Wortley Montague. She invited a timid lover to take a ride with her, and offered for his use a mare which was apparently very gentle. The enamored youth accepted the flattering invitation, and with the assistance of a groom mounted the spirited animal, and away went her ladyship on her fleet pony, the quiet mare following suit with a will. The timid lover could no longer hold on by his bridle, so, like Gilpin,

He grasped the mane with both his hands,
And eke with all his might,

screaming with terror, as the mare made straight for a five-barred gate, which she had leapt a hundred times. The rider held on until the fearful leap was made, and then was shot out of the saddle like a stone from a sling."

Mr. Gordon left the room to prepare for his ride, and Mr. Sunderland said:

"Herbert, I understand we are to have another wedding soon—that your boy is to marry that beautiful elfish-looking daughter of Stanly's. If so, my advice to Charlie would be to make her join the Romish Church beforehand, so that she may obtain absolution at least once a week for her misdeeds. It may afford as great relief to her as to my neighbor, Pat Mooney. He is fond of a 'drop of the creature nate,' and has a frolic regularly once a week,

which ends in a 'tarin ruction' with his wife and a brush of shillalahs. When he becomes sober they both rush off to the priest, and he settles the difficulty and sends them home billing and cooing like a pair of doves until the next spree. The other day he came over in great distress to borrow a horse from me, saying that he had forgotten it was Friday, and had eat a thundering chance of meat for breakfast, and must go to the priest immediately. I told him he would save time and trouble by taking an emetic, but he posted off like Ichabod Crane when the goblin was after him in Sleepy Hollow."

A general laugh followed this amusing account of the devout Irishman, and Mr. Sunderland again asked:

"What about the wedding? I have heard the rumor repeated, yet shall not believe it unless it is confirmed at headquarters."

"I do not think it can be true, as Charlie has not consulted me about it. When he does, I shall advise him for the best, and leave him to act for himself," replied Mr. Herbert.

"Ah, then, there is no truth in the report! for your son has too much good sense to be wheedled into matrimony by this heartless beauty, who would play with men's hearts as a cat would with mice. The girls all say it requires as much pains and labor to get her up for exhibition as it did King George IV., who was trussed and braced by stays to keep his flesh in proper trim; though when the arduous duties of the toilet are over with, she is certainly well paid for her trouble, and looks as charming as Cleopatra did when she robbed Mark Antony of his honor and put upon him the chains of Pluto. Sidney Smith said he must have recourse to an umbrella to protect him from the 'Norton rays;' and if Charlie's optics are at all dazzled by the Stanly rays, I should recommend the shelter of his own

roof, for no brighter eyes can be found elsewhere." As he concluded, Mr. Gordon entered the room, and the three gentlemen took their departure.

Then Harry Sunderland remarked :

"Your friend will find my uncle a *comparative man*, Mrs. Herbert, for he seldom speaks of persons without likening them to some prominent historical or fictitious character."

"He will find him very interesting and amusing—candid and liberal in his opinions, and free from all malice or national prejudices," was the reply.

While they conversed together, Lula took occasion to examine the petals of the magnolia which lay in her basket, and found written on one of them, "*Je ne cherche qu'un*," in Charlie's handwriting.

She replaced them with a smothered sigh, and thought of the beautiful photograph which had revealed the object whom he sought, supposing that he had adopted this method of imparting his secret to her.

But when alone in her own room, and the restraint which had bound her heart as with metallic bands had been thrown aside, she cried aloud in bitter anguish :

"Oh, I cannot, cannot witness their happiness, nor see him resign his noble heart so fondly, so trustingly, into the keeping of that cold, selfish, and untruthful girl! I shall die if compelled to stand calmly by and behold the dreadful sacrifice! I must, I must fly from scenes that will ever remind me of the happy past, for I am no longer needed here! But where, oh! where can I go?"

She knelt at the Mercy-seat and prayed for strength and guidance.

Mr. Gordon's presence had been a pleasure and relief during this trying ordeal, and when he spoke of his departure, and in low, eager tones inquired: "If I come

again, will you welcome me kindly to Belvoir?" her eyes drooped for a moment; then raising them to his face, she answered frankly:

"Yes;" and then added immediately: "The associations connected with your visit are all of an agreeable nature; and should you at a future time be induced to honor us with your presence again, I doubt not that the acquaintances you have made here will hail your coming with no ordinary degree of delight."

CHAPTER XXI.

To you my soul's affections move
Devoutly, warmly true;
My life has been a task of love,
One long, long thought of you.

AFTER several weeks' absence Charlie returned home, and, in a private interview with his father, informed him of Robert Carlton's locality, and of his distressed state of mind, which bordered almost on frenzy in regard to the unfortunate affair, and the effect it might have on the happiness of his parents. The unhappy young man, conscious of having acted justifiably in defending himself, had fully determined to return and surrender his person to the legal authorities and abide the consequences. No advice could alter this mad determination, and his appearance might be looked for at any moment.

Robert had said:

"Rather than remain an outcast, roaming uselessly over the world, and hunted like some wild beast, he would return and show his friends how fearlessly an innocent man could die; that under existing circumstances, life would never be desirable."

After Mrs. Carlton was assured by Charlie of her son's safety, she decided to follow Dr. Clinton's advice, to take a trip to the Springs, as her feeble constitution required a more bracing atmosphere, after the intense excitement of the last few weeks.

At the urgent solicitation of Alice and her mother, Mrs. Herbert willingly consented for Lula to accompany them, hoping that a change of climate would be beneficial to the

gentle girl, whose pale cheeks and nervousness gave indications of declining health.

Since his return, Charlie had resumed his accustomed easy and fraternal intercourse with Lula. His mother had given him a full and satisfactory account of Alfred Raymond's last visit and its serious result, which had driven that promising young man from a home where he was loved and appreciated.

Charlie was painfully affected in contemplating the probable destiny of his friend, yet he felt that a burden had been taken from his own heart, and he could once more breathe freely. Then he acknowledged his weakness in being so easily duped by the artful duplicity of Julia Stanly, which she unwittingly betrayed on the evening of Dr. Clinton's wedding.

Lula had never manifested any curiosity about the photograph, being in his possession, and Mrs. Herbert did not think it necessary to refer to it, as the matter had been a source of deep mortification to her. Therefore the orphan left home under the painful delusion that Charlie was unconditionally engaged to Julia Stanly.

A few days afterward, young Herbert was sitting in the library, leaning back, with his feet resting upon the window-sill—a favorite position of smokers—indulging a cigar and enjoying blissful dreams of the future. As the fumes were gracefully wafted above by the breeze that fanned his tranquil brow, his spirit took its flight and was holding sweet communion with that of Lula, who was far away among the gay throng who frequent the watering-places, to while away the long and sultry days of a Southern summer.

He was aroused by his father, who, folding the letter he was reading, remarked:

"I suppose, my son, you know that Mr. Gordon will probably return to us in the fall or winter; he tells me

that Lula had promised to welcome his coming, and asks my permission to address her."

Charlie threw away the cigar, and staring wildly at the speaker for a moment, buried his face in his hands, exclaiming:

"Oh, father! spare me another trial!"

"My dear boy, act like a man. You remind me of *Æsop's fable*—*Canis jacebat in præsepi*. You will not ask her to marry you, nor will you let any one else have her," said his father, laughingly, and then adding more seriously: "You have manifested a decided preference for Miss Stanly, by writing to her from New York, and seeking her first on your return; and in robbing Lula's album of your photograph, your mother tells me, that the black-eyed beauty might boast of her conquest, which she certainly has done, in a manner that has convinced every one she is to be the future mistress of Belvoir. What possible objection then can you have to Mr. Gordon? If you marry Miss Stanly, I think it would be advisable to let him remove Lula from here, for there is no congeniality between the two girls, and but little happiness would fall to the share of my precious, pure-minded darling from such intimate companionship."

"Oh, father, have mercy on me! do not taunt me so cruelly! I have no idea of marrying Miss Stanly."

After a pause, he asked:

"Do you suppose that Lula was under this impression when she gave Mr. Gordon permission to return?"

"She had every reason to think so; for no one ever saw her without proclaiming your engagement with Miss Stanly. Yet I do not know that it influenced her in regard to this affair with Mr. Gordon, for he is a most estimable young man—intelligent and wealthy; and, in truth, an eligible offer in every respect. The temptation to accept his hand would be irresistible to any girl whose affections

were not otherwise engaged. I would suggest that you first disabuse Lula's mind of this fancied engagement of yours, and then come out frankly and ask her to decide between the patrician and plebeian.

"I think the fact of his belonging to the former class will not influence her in the least, for her good sense has taught her that merit alone constitutes true nobility. Still, if Mr. Gordon should be preferred, you must be contented to see her happy, and console yourself with the knowledge that he is a gentleman whose like we shall rarely see again, and that he will appreciate her."

Charlie had fully decided to follow his father's advice.

He would go to the Springs immediately, and have his weal or his woe determined at once; though fears overshadowed his hopes, for the young Englishman was indeed a most formidable rival. The suspense was intolerable, and he could endure it no longer.

"Man proposes, but God disposes."

The next mail brought letters of vital importance concerning some intricate lawsuit, and Charlie was to be dispatched in lieu of his father to some other portion of the State. He was perplexed beyond measure at this sudden change in his programme, but as the law business would admit of no delay, necessity compelled him to submit to its stern mandate, and prepare forthwith for his journey.

However, he wrote a letter explanatory of his connection with Julia Stanly—the manner in which she had possessed herself of his photograph, and of her surprising him by sending her own to him in New York.

This hastily written epistle, which only breathed fraternal affection, was posted with the utmost care previous to his departure.

On returning, after a lengthened absence, he found the whole country in a ferment of excitement caused by the

sudden return of Robert Carlton. His friends were paralyzed with fears for his safety, while his enemies were mute with admiration and amazement at the bold, reckless daring which defied their fierce and angry threats.

A heavy bond was given for his appearance at court, and fearlessly he walked, unmolested, through the thoroughfares of his native city.

Notwithstanding Robert's indifference to life, he regretted, when too late, his hasty coming, after seeing its unhappy effect upon his father.

It was indeed Mr. Carlton's wish that his son should return at some future time, and go through the form of a trial, but that period had not arrived.

The events connected with Harper's sudden death were too recent for the prejudices of the people to have subsided into rational opinions. As the important day approached, he trembled with fear, lest his noble, generous boy should be compelled to suffer an ignominious fate. It was painful to witness the torturing effect of this dreadful excitement upon the manly form of the affectionate father, whose raven locks were gradually hiding beneath a network of silver, to watch the quivering motion of his lips, and the moisture which often dimmed his bright eyes, as they fondly rested on his first-born, his noble, courageous boy.

The ablest counsel in the country had been employed in his behalf, and friends were indefatigable in seeking for evidence to establish his innocence; but, alas! their efforts were unavailing. Even the man Jones, who witnessed the whole affair, and assisted Robert in making his escape, had disappeared mysteriously, and had neither been seen nor heard of since he parted from him. Search was made in every direction; rewards were temptingly offered for any information concerning him, but without success; and strong suspicions that he had been treacherously dealt

with at length settled despondingly upon the minds of Mr. Carlton and his friends.

Fortunately Mrs. Carlton and Alice were away, and in ignorance of this uneasy state of affairs; but unpleasant rumors at last reached the Springs, which caused them to hasten homeward with anxious, troubled hearts.

Ah! who can tell the depth of that mother's woe, as she meditated, through long, weary days and sleepless nights, on the probable destiny of her child—the bright and handsome boy whose existence was her own! Cold and selfish is every human feeling compared to the love of a mother. Other affections may wither from carelessness or neglect—crime and disgrace may weaken and sunder other ties, but will strengthen and render more secure the link that unites a mother to her child.

In its devotion, unselfishness, and purity it approaches nearer to that divine love displayed by Christ on the heights of Calvary for sinful, unregenerate man, than has ever since or before stirred the hearts of mortals. Its impress is holy, its origin is from above, and neither sorrow, sin, shame, nor death can conquer a mother's imperishable devotion.

"The fate of a child," said Napoleon Bonaparte, "is the work of a mother."

If this be true, it is a fearful trust imposed upon woman, and Mrs. Carlton felt now that this confidence had been abused—that she had neglected to train up her child in the way he should go—that she had restrained him not; and the fate of Eli's hapless sons murdered sleep and haunted her waking dreams.

Yet the poor mother bore up with true heroism during this distressing ordeal for the sake of her husband and son. She had learned to draw strength from that fountain which flowed from "Immanuel's veins," and knew that

With pitying eyes the Prince of grace
Beheld our helpless grief;
He saw, and oh, amazing love!
He ran to our relief.

Meek, gentle Alice was the unselfish, untiring minister to the comfort of the household. She too had found peace, and could

Look aloft, and be firm and fearless of heart,

and now sought eagerly to brighten with sunny hope the dark cloud of despondency which threatened to burst with maddening fury over their heads.

Lula returned from the Springs invigorated in health and strength, and her improved appearance was attributed to the efficacy of the mineral waters, whereas all merit should have been ascribed to Charlie's letter, which had quieted her fears with regard to his marriage with Julia Stanly.

As Dr. Clinton and Annie were in possession of Mrs. Grant's late residence, they petitioned for Lula's company a portion of the time, and had fitted up an elegant suite of rooms for her exclusive use and benefit, the doctor alleging as a reason that it was necessary for the young mistress to form the acquaintance and study the peculiar disposition of her dependents; showing them by her frequent presence that she was interested in their welfare and comfort, and did not view them merely as machines for putting money into her purse.

The Herberts acknowledged the propriety and justness of this course, and reluctantly yielded their consent for her to spend a week occasionally with them, but no longer period would be allowed her to occupy the "State apartments," as her rooms were laughingly called.

Charlie said :

"You know, Birdie, the old *mammies* say you are the guardian angel of the plantation, so your visits must be like angels'—few and far between."

Again the orphan renews her acquaintance with the scenes of her childhood, and makes daily visits to the aged and afflicted negroes, among whom are her old friends Elsy and her "John Anderson, my Jo John."

All who are cognizant of the relationship existing between negroes and their owners, know that the affection of the former for the latter descends with unchanging fidelity to their children; and the nurses of the white parents are always held in high regard by their offspring when they grow up, as is shown by numerous acts of kindness and love toward the old negroes. The little children of the two classes when young play together, and any little toys that either may possess are regarded as common property. The old negroes usually become pensioners, existing without labor—supported by the owner in idleness—are regarded as a privileged class, petted and favored by all who know them. Many now living can recall with delight the figures of the old *daddies* and *mammies* as they were seen idling and basking themselves in the sunshine around the old homesteads.

Even, as in the case of Lula, when they descend to those who were not bound by ties of consanguinity to the owner, they manifest for them the same fondness and reliance, and hence it is not to be wondered at that her visits afforded great delight and satisfaction, she being regarded as their future friend and mistress.

As she was performing her accustomed round of duty, she called at the house of the couple before mentioned.

"How are you to-day, Aunt Elsy?" she asked.

"Thank de Lord, I'm poorly yet; though the misery most done gone clean out ob me back, and I kin walk three miles to de Cool-Spring Meetin'-house, and praise de

good Lord as loud an' long as any ob um. Couldn't do dat in old mist'es time, thank de Lord! But you see, Mars Doctor done gib me someting nudder one Saturday, and tell me 'twill make me back strong and make me lib long, and I tried it. Sure nuff, I got up nex morning and put on dat new frock what you sent me, and went to meetin' as spry as any ob de colored folks."

"I am glad to find you doing so well."

Then she asked :

"How is your health, Uncle John?"

"I'm 'bout, thank yé, mist'es; Mars Doctor done me a powerful chance of good, too; de rumatiz is done most left my poor bones, an I kin walk to the river and set and fish dar all day, if I have good 'bacca to smoke. Dat money you gib me, when you come over here 'fore, bought de best 'bacca I eber seed in all my born days, but it's most done gone now, and I don't know what I gwine do; I ain't got no more money."

Lula took the hint, and gave the old man some money to replenish his tobacco-pouch, and proceeded to the next cabin, followed by a profusion of blessings from the happy, idle old pensioners.

All were glad to see her; many were the remarks made upon her beauty and dress, and she retired amid a profusion of compliments; and many a "long may you live mist'es," greeted her ears as she entered the house.

* * * * *

In the mean time Charlie Herbert was studiously applying himself to his law books, in order to defend the life and honor of his friend, Robert Carlton. The case still presented a dark and gloomy aspect, and fears that he might be condemned on circumstantial evidence only, prevailed to an alarming extent. But still Charlie determined to fight vigorously, and leave no stone unturned by which he might benefit the noble but impulsive young man. As

the faces of the older lawyers began to assume a more dubious aspect, and a silent conviction seemed to settle upon other minds that the law would be rigorously enforced, according to the testimony adduced by the prosecuting party, Charlie would return to his studies with renewed vigor, and exclaim :

“He must, he shall be saved !”

CHAPTER XXII.

I know you lawyers can with ease
Twist words and meanings as you please;
That language, by your skill made pliant,
Will bend to favor every client.

THE important day at length arrived, and long before the hour appointed for the opening of court, the vast hall was filled to overflowing, and the large concourse which thronged every approach to the temple of justice was positively appalling to the friends of the prisoner. The case had excited universal interest on account of the popularity and prominent position of Mr. Carlton, and visitors had collected from various directions to witness the trial of his son.

Robert advanced with habitual self-possession, and took his stand within the bar; his face was pale and careworn, but serene, on which "*mens æqua in arduis*" was legibly written, as it was on the brow of Warren Hastings when he was impeached for "high crimes and misdemeanors" in the great hall of Westminster.

The preliminary stages of the trial passed with absorbing interest. The witnesses were examined, and the prosecuting attorney arose. By a bitter, vindictive speech he produced a strong and unreasonable feeling in the minds of the people against the prisoner, and as he continued the fierce invective against the so-called "midnight assassin," his listeners were moved with indignation, and the grave looks and prophetic shaking of heads indicated which way their opinion leaned.

Then came the elder counsel for the defendant, who forcibly expounded the law, seized the defensible points of the case, pressed them with power and eloquence upon the jury, and concluded with a highly-wrought eulogium on the character of young Carlton.

At its close, some indications of a change in sentiment were plainly visible on their countenances.

Other speakers followed in the same strain, but no additional light was thrown upon the important subject. The patience of the audience appeared to weary with the length and monotony of their arguments, and signs of restlessness were manifested in every part of the room.

Charlie Herbert arose.

It was his first appearance before so large an auditory, and, notwithstanding the impatience displayed by the crowd toward the close of the preceding speech, silence was again restored, as all were eager and curious to hear the youthful *debutant* in defense of his friend and companion.

The first sentences fell falteringly, and almost inaudibly from his lips, and his friends hung their heads, abashed at this unpromising beginning.

Their discomfiture, however, was of short duration; for he caught the pleading eye of Mr. Carlton, and Robert's pale face reproached him sadly for his loss of self-possession, and acted like magic in restoring his equilibrium. He appeared suddenly to be endowed with supernatural strength and courage, and all of the surroundings were forgotten.

His voice, action, and style immediately assumed a grandeur that electrified and thrilled the hearts of the people. With a magician's power he decoyed their minds from the unfavorable impressions produced by the witnesses and opposing counsel, and led them to believe that by some "*ignis fatuus*" their convictions had been led

astray, and they were about to become murderers themselves. One by one their former conclusions were swept with a tornado-like force from their minds, and they were aghast at the horrid picture he drew of their own shameless depravity in wishing to condemn an innocent man. Uncontrollable tears fell from their eyes, and they were actually indignant at the idea of being so easily duped by Harper's counsel. So terribly were these vivid word-paintings of Charlie Herbert's impressed upon the hearts of the jurors, that one of them afterward remarked, if he had not been fascinated, and irresistibly chained to his seat by the eloquence and brilliancy which gleamed from the speaker's eye, he would have rushed headlong from the room, in order to escape the stings of remorse for suspecting Carlton of murder. A death-like silence reigned throughout the assembly, and Charlie continued :

"Blackstone, supported by Coke, says 'murder is where a person of sound memory and discretion unlawfully killeth any reasonable creature in being and under the king's peace, with malice aforethought, either express or implied.'

"Gentlemen of the jury, I see among you some who have known my friend and honorable client from his earliest infancy, and appeal to your knowledge of his character to know whether from your hearts you can conscientiously accuse him of malice, or pronounce that noble young man a murderer? Go among the poor and needy, and inquire his character! Call together the friends and companions of his childhood and youth, and ask if any can recall a word or action of his that would reflect discredit upon a gentleman? Though legions should proclaim him guilty, I would still vouch for his innocence, if his word alone declared it; for Robert Carlton's honor is dearer to him than life. The fact of his presenting himself before you to-day is sufficient evidence of this truth."

Here he read Robert's letter written to him a few hours after the difficulty, which produced a decided impression in favor of the writer, and then continued:

"Had my friend been guilty, his father's wealth could have purchased safety—independence for his son in some foreign land; but his honorable soul rejected the life and liberty that was to be bought at the expense of his honor, and the loss of your confidence and esteem. Beware! oh, beware, how you forfeit the trust imposed upon you!

"I see in this assembly Dr. Hall, that man of God, the venerable preceptor who has helped to guide and direct the strong mind of young Carlton in the paths of rectitude. Ask him if the fear of punishment ever intimidated his pupil, or caused him to utter an untruth? He will tell you that Robert never told a lie—that to him honor, truth, and conscience are worth more than life. It was the devil, and not God who said, 'Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath, will he give for his life'—hence it is false.

"There is no law, legal or divine, forbidding us to take the life of those who are seeking to destroy our lives, if there is no other mode of escape. The sacred lips which proclaimed from Sinai the moral law, proved this by saying: 'If a thief be found breaking up, and be smitten that he die, then shall no blood be shed for him.' How much more justifiable in the sight of God one would be, for defending himself against a murderous assault, we can easily foresee."

Then pointing to the jury, he said with solemnity and a peculiar emphasis which painfully thrilled every heart, as if he spoke by divine injunction:

"'He that swears away the life of a fellow-creature is himself a murderer.' 'He that suborns others to do the same is a murderer.' 'He who passes unjust sentence of death is a murderer.'"

Then, lowering his voice, he softly added: "Remember, oh, remember! 'Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.'"

Breathless silence reigned throughout the hall as he ceased to speak and every eye was fixed with admiration and apparent awe upon the young orator who had so eloquently and vigorously defended his friend.

At length an old gentleman, who had been stooping forward to listen with suspended respiration, drew a sigh of relief, and exclaimed, in the homely style of the old Virginians, "He is almost equal to Patrick when he plead against the parsons."

Mr. Herbert had listened with pleased surprise and deep emotion to this able defense; and when it was concluded, he bowed his head and wiped a tear from his eye, while an audible "Thank God," escaped from his lips.

It was plainly visible that the feelings of all had undergone a complete change. Even those who had been most bitter in their feelings toward the prisoner and called for his execution, were now convinced of his innocence. It was evident that the case would be decided in his favor. Just at that moment appeared Alfred Raymond upon the stage of action.

After a courtly obeisance to the court and bar, he addressed himself to the jury, and "remarked that his friend Herbert had left him but little to say; yet duty, inclination, and friendship compelled him to join his feeble voice to those who had plead so eloquently in defense of one whose esteem would exalt the dignity of an emperor."

He continued to address them with a power, eloquence, and pathos which at one moment would draw tears from their eyes, and the next would bring the flush of indignation to their faces. All felt themselves again under the magic spell of a superior intellect. The weary, careworn look had passed from his countenance, which shone with splendid grandeur as he swayed the feelings of the multitude at his will and pleasure. Burst after burst of eloquence rolled from his inspired lips, as freely as water

from some inexhaustible fountain, and not until the feebleness of his voice forbade further utterance did he cease speaking.

Then, seating himself, he said: "Let William Jones be called as a witness."

At this one simultaneous cry of gratitude arose from Robert Carlton's friends.

"Thank God, my boy is saved!" exclaimed his father, bursting into tears, as Jones's name greeted his ear.

Jones's evidence was conclusive.

He had been watching a sick friend on the night of the difficulty, and was returning home when he noticed Robert Carlton walking leisurely along the street. Fearing that something unusual occasioned his appearance at this late hour of the night, Jones was about to address him, when he saw Harper pass and fire his pistol, and was in the act of pulling the trigger again over his shoulder, when young Carlton, standing almost in the same position, fired, and Harper fell. The jury left the room for a few minutes, and returned with a verdict of justifiable homicide.

Friends rushed around the late prisoner with sincere congratulations, and the proud and happy father, taking the arm of his son, bore him off in triumph to his home and his anxious mother, followed by the profound respect and admiration of the rejoicing crowd.

The faithful Jones had accompanied Robert Carlton to a place of safety, and remained with him until Charlie Herbert arrived.

Disregarding every remonstrance of his two friends, the unhappy Robert determined to return home and undergo a trial. He had repeatedly mentioned, in Jones's presence, that if he could only have Charlie Herbert and Alfred Raymond to defend him, there would be no doubt about the result. But Raymond's whereabouts was a mystery

which preyed upon his mind to such an extent, that it affected Jones also, causing him to believe that unless the absent friend could be found, the case would be certainly decided against Carlton.

Jones had received many favors from Robert and his father, and decided to manifest his gratitude to them by seeking Raymond and urging him to come to the rescue of his unfortunate friend. This intention he imparted to no one for fear of exciting false hopes, as he might fail to find the object of his search. By making various inquiries, he learned sufficient to induce the belief that Raymond had probably returned to his former home in Virginia.

He accordingly set out for Richmond; but there disappointment awaited him. Thinking and saying that "where there is a will there is a way," he gathered fresh courage and commenced his pursuit anew.

Through various towns, villages, and cities the same fate attended his efforts, and he felt that the search must be given up in despair, as there was scarcely time sufficient for him to return before the opening of court, when accident revealed to him Raymond's location in Baltimore.

Thither he went as fast as steam and the locomotive could carry him, and there his hopes were crowned with complete success.

Any less reason than the imminent peril of a beloved and treasured friend would have caused Raymond to decline returning at this early day to the far South; but laying aside all selfish feelings, he immediately hastened his departure. By traveling day and night, without rest or scarcely taking time to eat, he arrived with the stanch and faithful Jones in time to hear Charlie Herbert's masterly effort in behalf of their mutual friend.

Around Charlie and Alfred friends and companions soon clustered, pouring into their ears compliments, the nature of which was sufficient to have intoxicated much older

heads; but Charlie playfully warded off these remarks by saying:

"It was the object alone which inspired us. Raymond can at any time issue an improved edition of his speech, but I shall never do the like again, unless some of you, my dear friends, get into trouble as Robert did, then Herbert will be at your service."

We will take one glance at the Carltons before closing this chapter. From the first joyful meeting of the united family we will not lift the sacred veil for curious eyes, but present them under auspices that must gladden every Christian's heart, and produce joy among angels in heaven.

In that house a family altar was erected on this memorable night, and grateful hearts devoutly poured forth thanks to God for his kindness and mercy. The large Bible, which had been so rarely used, was placed upon the stand, and Mr. Carlton, with tear-dimmed eyes, read, by the light of the midnight taper, its blessed promises.

Then kneeling down to heaven's eternal King,
 The saint, the father, and the husband prays;
 Hope springs exulting on triumphant wing,
 That thus they all shall meet in future days;
 There ever bask in uncreated rays,
 No more to sigh or shed the bitter tear,
 Together hymning their Creator's praise,
 In such society yet still more dear,
 While circling time moves round in an eternal sphere.

CHAPTER XXIII.

I love thee, and I feel
That in the fountain of my heart a seal
Is set, to keep its waters pure and bright,
For thee.

It was toward the small hours of the morning when Mr. Herbert and Charlie returned from the court-house and entered the grounds of Belvoir, startling the mocking-birds, which, with sweet ringing notes, shook off their drowsiness, and sprang affrighted from downy couches among the thick laurel branches, to seek higher refuge on the boughs of some feathery elm, where the lonely whip-poor-will sung his plaintive solo, and remained lord of the lofty domain.

Light shone from the windows, and figures were seen passing to and fro, as if sleep had flown from the dwelling.

As the sound of horses' feet and wheels was heard approaching, the door opened, and Lula glided through, then swiftly descending the steps, she followed the direction of the sound, and breathlessly accosted them:—

"Oh, uncle! oh, Charlie! tell me quickly! what was the decision of the court? Is Robert free?"

The carriage stopped immediately, and Mr. Herbert replied:

"Yes, free! without a stain upon his honored name."

Charlie leaped from the carriage, and supported the excited girl with his arm, as she appeared ready to sink to the ground from excessive joy, and Mr. Herbert drove on to relieve the anxiety of his wife.

"And did you speak, Charlie?"

"Yes, Birdie, I plead for Robert and for you, as I shall never plead again, except for myself."

She looked into his face with amazement, and Charlie continued :

"The noble fellow had in confidence informed me of his love for you, and of your firm but gentle refusal of him on that fatal night. He saw that your kind heart was troubled at the thought of giving him pain, and endeavored to conceal his torture under a promise of perpetual friendship. But as soon as you passed from his sight the mask was thrown aside, and in order to bear the misery of that dreadful night, he sought aid from the sparkling liquid which brings madness with oblivion, and then the difficulty originated which destroyed one life and threatened another. I know that you were totally ignorant of this before, but it has weighed heavily upon my spirits, as I feared the Carltons might visit their misfortunes on your innocent head ; therefore I felt in pleading for him I was shielding you from reproach, and clearing your life from the blighting shadows of remorse."

"Oh, Charlie ! if I had suspected myself of having in any way caused this great trouble and anxiety, I believe I could never have survived this trial."

"I knew that a knowledge of this fact would affect you seriously, therefore would not reveal it until his fate was favorably decided. Thank God ! he is once more a free and independent man, and will, I hope, prove a noble son to a noble father."

After a slight hesitation, he continued :

"But something must be done with you, my dear little mischief-maker ! it will never do to allow you to be disturbing the peace and quietude of families, and the community generally, as you have been doing for the last year. If some one does not take you in charge, the public authorities may arrest you as a disturber of the peace."

"Why, Charlie! what do you mean? I am unable to comprehend your enigma. With what other offense can you charge me?"

"I charge you also with being accessory to the sudden and mysterious disappearance of Alfred Raymond, attorney-at-law; causing thereby great distress among his relatives and friends, and producing consternation in the minds of his clients. Also I charge you with having alienated the affection of the Hon. Mr. Gordon from his family and his country, which has caused untold trouble and anxiety, both at home and abroad, in regard to the final result."

"You are too cruel! One would imagine that you considered my presence as deleterious as the proximity of the Upas-tree. What would you have me do? Go into a convent and take the veil?"

Her words instantly arrested his footsteps, and looking intently upon her sweet, inquiring face, as if he hoped to find written there permission to reveal the hidden secret, he followed the impulse of his heart, and said, with visible emotion:

"No, indeed, my precious darling! If you ever take the veil, let it be a bridal-veil—let Belvoir be your convent, and allow me to be the high priest, who will minister unceasingly to your comfort and happiness."

Then Charlie plead for himself: with a fervor and eloquence not inferior to that which he had displayed before the court, he urged his suit.

Then taking her little hand, which trembled in his grasp, he listened eagerly for some reply.

None came, but her hand ceased to quiver, and rested calmly in its prison.

"My darling! my idol! my life! only speak one word! say that you love me—more than you do Mr. Gordon—better than all the world," he said, beseechingly.

They had reached the house, and the full light of the

chandelier shone through the window upon her glowing face, as she looked up and answered, truthfully :

"Yes, Charlie, you know that I do."

Then clasping with each of his own the little hand that had rested so trustingly in his grasp, he pressed it fervently to his lips, and exclaimed :

"Thank God ! it is mine, and mine only."

Although he had in former days clasped her in his arms, and bestowed upon her the kiss of brotherly love, yet so pure and lovely did she appear, looking up to him with her calm, blue eyes, that he dared not profane her vestal beauty by a more tender embrace.

Just then his mother came to the door for the purpose of calling them into the house.

Lula sprang from his hold, ran up the steps, and pausing only for a kiss and good night to Mrs. Herbert, rushed into her own room.

The amiable lady looked at her retreating figure, and exclaimed, with amazement :

"Why, what is the matter with Lula? She seems strangely agitated—her face is crimson and her lips are actually feverish. I fear this anxious waiting and watching to hear the result of Robert's trial has been too much for her; but I suppose that Alfred's unexpected return has affected her. Did she complain of being ill, Charlie?"

"Oh, no, mother; but she needs rest, and so do you. I imagine that father has given you a graphic account of the proceedings in court."

"Yes, my son ! I feel extremely gratified at the happy termination of the trial, and am delighted to hear that you acquitted yourself so handsomely. I was afraid that the formidable array of talent in the house might intimidate and disconcert you; but the object at stake was sufficient, it seems, to overcome any bashfulness you may have felt in making your first appearance at the bar. Come in,

Charlie, and take a cup of tea—then you must sleep off this intense excitement which has caused so many wakeful nights.”

Charlie's appearance at that moment certainly did not indicate weariness, and with a peculiarly bright and cheerful expression incomprehensible to his mother, he replied:

“Mother, I shall rest sweetly and calmly now, as I have not for months. This has been the happiest and most eventful period of my life; and I shall close my eyes to-night with the blissful thought of having crowned your life with the best and purest blessings.”

As Charlie received a cup of tea from his mother's hand, he asked if Lula had taken any during the evening.

“No, she has not: nor could I persuade her to eat, so painfully excited has she been all day.”

Mrs. Herbert ordered Lizzie to carry tea to her young mistress, and Charlie added a plate of edibles to the little silver waiter which the girl was taking from the room, and said:

“Tell Miss Lula that I insist upon her taking some refreshment before she retires, and that we shall expect to see her bright and cheerful in the morning.”

The sun was shining bright and high from a cloudless sky on the following day, and the feathered minstrels had long since ceased their matin songs, and sought among the clustered trees temporary shelter from the solar rays. From a shady nook in an apple-tree, which had been the domicile of its ancestors, a favorite blue-bird was sending forth a soft, agreeable warble, when Charlie Herbert entered the parlor, where his father and mother had preceded him.

After bestowing the customary morning kiss upon the latter, he took a card from the escritoir, and wrote upon it, “Come, my darling! I am waiting for you.”

Then ringing the bell for a servant, he dispatched the card to Lula.

Mrs. Herbert endeavored to engage him in conversation concerning the events of the trial, but his thoughts seemed to be abstracted, and his eyes were fixed immovably on the staircase, as he stood facing them in front of the door.

Presently his listening ear caught the sound of a light footstep slowly descending the stairs, and he rushed from the room.

His mother watched him with much concern, and remarked :

"Mr. Herbert, I think our Scottish friends would pronounce Charlie daft, this morning. Indeed he has not appeared like himself since his return home last night."

Her husband smiled, and replied :

"The compliments which were so lavishly bestowed upon him after the adjournment of court last night were sufficient to turn the head of any ordinary young man; still I do not think they made much impression on him, and doubt whether he has thought of these since. I am inclined to think his mind is occupied with quite a different subject at present."

Before his wife could inquire further, Charlie re-entered the room, looking surprisingly happy, with Lula leaning upon his arm, blushing, and radiantly beautiful.

Mr. and Mrs. Herbert gazed with amazement as they approached, and stood before them, when the young gentleman merrily said :

"Father—mother—allow me to present you a daughter of whom you may well be proud—the future bride of your son."

His parents were for a moment mute with astonishment.

Lula lifted her soft eyes timidly to Mrs. Herbert's face,

and the delighted mother clasped the lovely girl convulsively to her bosom, and vociferated :

"My darling, precious child ! my daughter ! God bless you, if this be true."

Mr. Herbert twined his arm caressingly around the blushing *fiancee*, and kissing her, said :

"Look up, my pet, and tell me truly, if I may indeed call you my own dear daughter."

"If you will," was the soft reply.

"My precious child, it is the one earnest desire of my heart. May God bless you, my daughter ! And if Charlie does not make you happy, I shall be tempted to disinherit him." Then, turning to his son, he said :

"My dear boy, I believe you will prove yourself worthy of the treasure which you have won. God bless you !" and with tearful eyes turned away.

Mrs. Herbert kissed Charlie, and remarked :

"My son, you have made me happy. Why did you not inform us of this important event before retiring last night, that we might have bestowed our blessings immediately upon this union of hearts, which has ever been the dearest but unuttered wish of your parents ?"

"My dear mother, the temptation to do so was very strong ; but I saw that you all were weary with anxious waiting and needed rest, and any additional excitement would have banished sleep from your pillow. Furthermore, my bird escaped immediately after I caught her, and I concluded it would be best to entrap her again, so that she might be presented in person as my long-coveted treasure to our beloved parents."

The mail arrived soon afterward and was distributed ; but no one save Mr. Herbert, who had returned to the room, seemed inclined to disturb the blissful quietude which had settled on their hearts by seeking elsewhere for pleasure or entertainment.

In looking over the morning news, a smile of agreeable surprise brightened the countenance of Mr. Herbert, and at length he said :

"Allow me to read the report of Robert Carlton's trial."

He then read an account of the proceedings, which have already been given, followed by an exceedingly complimentary notice of Mr. Charles Herbert's speech, in which the writer predicted a glorious career of fame and usefulness for the brilliant and eloquent young orator.

Charlie watched the expression of Lula's face as it glowed with surprise and pleasure during the reading of the article, and inwardly pronounced himself "truly blest," as he witnessed this undisguised manifestation of her affection for him.

As his father paused for a moment, his son laughingly remarked :

"'Coming events cast their shadows before.' Last night I had dreams—sweet dreams—of a bright and happy future, and this morning I find myself suddenly famous, beside being the happiest man alive."

His father responded mildly :

"My son, let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth ; a stranger, and not thine own lips. Remember it is a divided honor which you receive from the press ; all the laurels are not bestowed upon you. Here is a well-deserved eulogium on the splendid effort of Alfred Raymond." Mr. Herbert commenced to read again.

Charlie turned a troubled glance on Lula at the sudden mention of Alfred's name, and saw her grow deathly pale and gasp for breath as she listened ; he hastily threw his arm around her, and exclaimed, frantically :

"Oh father, stop, for God's sake !"

In an instant all were in the wildest confusion. Mr. and Mrs. Herbert were entirely at a loss to comprehend the nature of this sudden attack which Charlie's alarm had

construed into something serious, as they were under the impression that he had informed her of Raymond's return.

She recovered herself in a few minutes, and said :

"I am sorry that you were all unnecessarily frightened; but I did not know that Alfred had returned, and as nothing had been heard of him since he left home, I imagined, as Annie did, that he was dead, until uncle surprised me greatly with the account of his appearance at court."

They were not, therefore, astonished at its effect upon the gentle girl, and reproached themselves for neglecting to apprise her of his advent more cautiously. Charlie's remorse was very great, and it was difficult to persuade him that Lula was not seriously ill; he would insist that she must confine herself to the sofa for the day and allow him to administer to her comfort.

His father said :

"Nonsense, Charlie! I do not intend you shall make a hot-house plant of my lily; take her out into the fresh air."

His advice was acted upon.

Beneath embowering shades that excluded the noonday beams, beside the pellucid stream and under the vine-clad arbor,

Whose spreading height with purple clusters crown'd,

they roamed and exchanged their vows of mutual love; hoping that in this blissful home they would contentedly repose, performing their allotted duties with grateful hearts to the bounteous Giver who so many blessings had bestowed. From his inmost soul, Charlie repeated:

With thee the charm of life shall last,
Although its rosy bloom be past;
Shall still endure when Time shall spread
His silver blossoms o'er my head.

No more with this vain world perplex'd,
Thou shalt prepare me for the next;
The springs of life shall gently cease,
And angels point the way to peace.

When they returned to the house some time afterward, and Mr. Herbert saw the fresh bloom on her cheeks, he was assured his surmise was correct, and said :

"My daughter, your air-bath has had a happy effect in restoring your color, and I hope your walk has quite refreshed you."

Going up to her, he put his hand under her chin, raised the lovely face, and kissed it, and with a significant smile, asked :

"What shall I write to the Hon. Mr. Gordon, my darling? Shall I tell him to come?"

"Oh, uncle! spare me if you please—ask Charlie."

The young gentleman, with an air of conscious pride, responded :

"We will send him our cards, joined together with a silver link or silken tie, and bid him 'come, haste to the wedding!'"

CHAPTER XXIV.

Sweet are the joys of home,
And pure as sweet; for they,
Like dews of morn and evening, come
To wake and close the day.

AFTER the excitement of the trial had passed away, the friends of Alfred Raymond observed his wan and shadowy appearance, his pale, transparent complexion, and wondered what secret sorrow could have left such deep traces on every lineament of his face.

With superior tact and skill he managed to evade their questions, and silently nursed his grief. It had been his intention to return to his new home immediately after the accomplishment of the important object which brought him to Georgia.

His plan was strenuously opposed by his friends and acquaintances, who insisted that he should not dissolve the ties which had bound them together during so many happy years; that having entered upon a career of usefulness, he might serve with credit to himself the land which had welcomed him so kindly when a friendless, homeless, orphan boy, and should now remain at his post, and discharge with fidelity the duties devolving upon him as a citizen and defender of the South.

This argument staggered his resolution, and he promised to give the subject proper deliberation before coming to a final decision; but as he had left Baltimore without an hour's notice, he must necessarily return there: his sudden disappearance might arouse suspicion in the minds of his newly-made friends in that city.

Mr. Carlton would not allow him to carry this purpose into effect until his wife had seen and thanked the generous, unselfish young man for his manly efforts in behalf of her son. Therefore he was compelled, *nolens volens*, to comply with his urgent request, and postpone his departure for a short time.

As the Carltons poured forth their thanks from grateful hearts to Charlie Herbert and Alfred Raymond the next evening, and acknowledged their obligations by numerous delicate acts and attentions, Alfred was irresistibly attracted toward the exquisite, statue-like beauty, and soft, dreamy eyes of Alice.

A strong impulse arose in his kind and generous nature to speak words of compassion and comfort to the sad widow, upon whose life the night-shades of remorse had settled with fearful gloom. As the evening wore on, the desire increased to such an extent that his own sorrow was partially forgotten in intense sympathy for her. He saw that the tempest of grief had passed away, and its purifying effects were evident in her regenerated character. The brilliancy and vivacity of her youth, which had sparkled like diamonds in sunshine, had given place to softer, better, and more ennobling qualities, which interested him as she had never done before. To him she now appeared

A being breathing thoughtful breath;
A traveler betwixt life and death;
The reason firm, the temperate will,
Endurance, foresight, strength, and skill,—
A perfect woman. Nobly planned,
To warn, to comfort, and command!
And yet a spirit still, and bright
With something of an angel light.

"There is but one who can surpass her in loveliness," he said, mentally, as Mr. Carlton interrupted the current of his thoughts, by asking:

"Alfred, what is your opinion in regard to Robert's adopting medicine as a profession?"

"I think he would become an ornament to the fraternity. But why not follow the law, Robert? With such talents as you possess, honorable distinction must soon be yours."

"Pardon me, Alfred; but I must decline further honors before the court, or among the bar, as I have already gained sufficient notoriety there."

He replied with a touch of his old humor, and added, more seriously :

"As I have been instrumental in destroying the life of one man, I desire to show my contrition of heart by assisting in keeping others on *terra firma* as long as possible, and will begin the study of the healing art, under the supervision of Dr. Clinton, forthwith."

"Well," said Alfred, laughingly, "the art of medicine is held in high repute by mankind—has engaged the attention of many very able men, and its adoption by you may lead to the acquisition of an honor similar to that enjoyed by one of the craft. It is said, that the death of a crowned-head created so great joy, on one occasion, that, after his decease, the door of the dwelling of the attendant physician was decorated with garlands, and the following inscription :

To the deliverer of his country."

Robert replied :

"The medical profession, though laborious, is, I think, engaging—full of honors, and affords the mind full scope for activity and entertainment."

"Why not try the practice of hydropathy?" said Alfred, still inclined to indulge a little humor with his friend.

"Oh no!" said Robert; "Lamb says, 'it was tried in Noah's day, and it killed more than it cured.'"

Then soberly continued :

"I can no longer be content to remain a pitiful drone in society, but will devote the remainder of my life to the happiness and good of my fellow-creatures."

Young Herbert remarked :

"Your motive is truly commendable, Robert ; and you could not have chosen a more worthy or capable instructor than Dr. Clinton. He is indeed an alleviator of life's miseries, and his name may be added to Harvey's, Garth's, Mead's, Abernethy's, Velpeau's, and Mott's, beside others of the same class, as a blessing to mankind. Independent of his skill as a physician, his benevolence and Christian example enable him to exert as great an influence in the community as any minister of the gospel. The healing art has produced some noble heroes, whose names and virtues will descend with unfading luster to the latest posterity. Pope, notwithstanding he said, on one occasion, 'I am dying with a hundred *good symptoms*,' bore honorable testimony to the skill of the faculty, and many others have acknowledged their indebtedness to the medical profession for prolonged pleasures and usefulness in life."

That night, in dreams, Alfred Raymond saw the bright particular star, which had ever appeared to be the star of his destiny, retreat with undiminished radiance from his wistful gaze, and another of mild luster appeared, and shed a soft, soothing light upon his dark and cheerless existence.

He arose next morning, refreshed and hopeful, feeling that some invisible chain still bound him to the sunny South, which he had scarce the power or inclination to break asunder. He received a note from Lula, and read, with more calmness than he could have done hitherto, the following lines :

"DEAR ALFRED, whom I so honor and respect, words can convey to you no adequate idea of the painful anxiety which your protracted absence has occasioned the orphan girl, who has ever confided in your noble, generous heart, as trustingly as a sister would in the pure unselfish love of an affectionate brother.

"Since we first met, long years ago, no joy or pleasure was ever complete unless shared by you. My youthful fears and disappointments, when confided to you, were ever soothed with such skill and gentleness, that bright hopes would spring from their ashes to cheer my drooping heart. Thus I became dependent upon your affectionate care and wiser judgment.

"Now, dear Alfred, I shall make a confession which I dared not do when we parted. The love you then sought was given to Charlie Herbert, before I ever met you, although I was unconscious of its nature, until I believed he had offered his heart and hand to another. But in this new relation my happiness will still be incomplete without your sympathy, my dear brother; and hoping that you will not refuse it in the present instance, I shall subscribe myself your affectionate sister,

"LULA GRAHAM."

He pressed the letter to his lips, and exclaimed:

"Heaven bless her dear truthful heart! I should be a fiend indeed to refuse the request of such an angel. Blind idiot that I was not to have foreseen this! Charlie, alone, is worthy of her, and I will yield willingly to his superior claim."

Then sighing, he seated himself with the air of Napoleon when meditating the abdication of his crown and empire at Fontainebleau.

After an interval, a tranquil expression, like soft moon-

light rising above dark, leaden clouds, appeared on his face; then seizing a pen, wrote a long, affectionate reply.

He congratulated her on the superior choice she had made, and assured her of his undying regard—his cordial sympathy—and his fraternal love, which neither time nor circumstances could alter.

After this letter was dispatched, Alfred decided to make Annie Clinton a visit.

In approaching the house, his eye was attracted in every direction by evidences of reform, and refined taste in the improvement of the grounds. The undulating lawn had been thinned of its matted undergrowth, and trees now stood in picturesque groups over a bright green surface, where curved walks wound gracefully, terminating at various places of beauty and interest. Sculptured vases of Maltese stone decorated the grounds, and the rippling stream, fringed with a mosaic of wild flowers, rolled here and there like sparkling diamonds, forming miniature cascades.

Annie saw Raymond as he drew near, and rushing out to meet him, exclaimed, joyfully:

"Dear Alfred, I am delighted to see you! I am indeed content, now that you have returned. It was impossible for me to be entirely happy, while your fate was involved in so much doubt and obscurity."

"My sweet cousin, I am rejoiced to find you looking so bright and cheerful, and to know that you preside over this Arcadian landscape, surrounded by every comfort and elegance necessary to make life desirable.

"The place is so completely metamorphosed, that I should never have recognized it, had I not been aware of its precise locality. I feel as if I had been mysteriously transported to the land of painters and fine arts, so complete is every arrangement here. And the Italian verandas—the ornamental chimney tops and irregular sky-outline of the

building—all harmonize perfectly with the charming scenery."

"The doctor has shown himself to be quite an adept in landscape gardening—he has brought order out of chaos, and made this wilderness blossom as the rose. Walk into the house; I rushed out very unceremoniously to meet you, leaving Robert Carlton and Alice in the parlor with Dr. Clinton. Robert has petitioned to be received into the doctor's office as a medical student."

During his visit, Alfred made inquiries about various friends and acquaintances—among others, Julia Stanly.

At the mention of her name, Annie laughed, and said :

"Oh! I must tell you a piece of news which I gleaned on yesterday from my friend and ally, Sallie Bidgley. She informed me that Julia Stanly had positively made a conquest of a wealthy widower, who numbers his dollars by the hundred thousand, and his children by the half dozen. Her elegant *trousseau* is actually being prepared, and the *corbeille* presented by the expectant bridegroom is as rich and handsome in some respects as the one given by General Junot to Mademoiselle Permon, on the eve of their marriage."

"I suppose she has despaired then of winning Charlie Herbert," observed Dr. Clinton.

"Yes, she pretends to have given him a touch of her slipper," was the laughing reply.

Robert exclaimed, ironically :

"Poor Charlie! He seems to bear his defeat with wonderful composure. I rather think this infatuated widower in the course of time will give the same experience as the man who said that, for the first six weeks after marriage, he wanted to eat his wife up, because she was so sweet, and had been sorry ever since that he had not done it."

"It is to be hoped she will prove a better stepmother

than she has a friend; if not, the poor children will be greatly to be pitied," observed Dr. Clinton.

Alfred Raymond was again subjected to the mesmeric influence of Alice's soft dreamy eyes, and after she had left the room with her brother, Annie asked:

"Is she not perfectly lovely, Alfred?"

"She is indeed!"

Then lapsing into silence he appeared lost in thought, until Dr. Clinton inquired if he had fully decided to make his home in Baltimore.

"No; I shall return here in a few weeks and link my destiny for weal or for woe with the sunny South."

"You have decided wisely, for I am certain that you will never find stancher friends elsewhere; and from the favorable impression produced in the community by your speech in court, I may safely predict that your fortune is made."

Annie exclaimed with great delight: "Oh, Alfred! I am quite relieved by your change of purpose. Now that my mind is entirely at ease on this subject, I can employ my leisure hours, during the doctor's absence, with my favorite amusement of castle-building for you, Charlie, and Robert; and the heroines of my airy palaces shall be Lula, Alice, and lastly, though by no means the least in this catalogue of choice spirits, is Mary Clinton, the doctor's lovely sister, who is to spend the next winter with us. Oh, Alfred! you must see and know Mary to appreciate her.

Sweet thoughts are mirrored in her face,
And every motion is a grace."

Here the conversation was interrupted by a waiting-maid, who entered the room and said to Annie:

"Missis, I want to speak wid you a minute."

Annie excused herself and left the room.

Just outside the door the girl spoke again to her mistress.

"Aunt Chloe told me to ax you what you gwine to have for dinner. She say how she thought bein' as you had company, you might want to have a chicken killed or sumtin' nother besides what you have every day. She say how bein' as you's so young she must think for you."

The young housekeeper smiled, and replied :

"Tell Aunt Chloe, I shall expect her to have a very nice dinner—such as she has every day; but I think it is too late now to kill a chicken; and besides, we shall have sufficient without that addition."

Then, returning to the parlor, she renewed the conversation which had been abruptly broken off.

In a few minutes the girl returned and requested another audience.

Annie followed the servant, who said :

"Aunt Chloe says you better have some fritters or sumtin' nother; that when company come in onexpected, old missis use to always have fritters or hasty pudding, or sometin' nother got up in a hurry."

"Tell her it is not necessary: the dinner I ordered this morning will do very well; and, Sally, you must have it served up immediately, for the doctor is compelled to visit his patients at the usual hours."

Annie had scarcely seated herself again, when another voice called to her from under the window :

"Miss, oh miss! can't you make dese childin' quit fiting out here? Joe's done hit Bill and made his nose bleed like all forty; and he's done fall down flat on his back, bellowin' just like somebody dun kilt him."

There arose such a deafening chorus of frightful screams from the yard, that the inmates of the parlor rushed to the window in alarm.

A dozen or more little black urchins were hallooing with all their might, and scampering away in great haste ;

while old Elsy, with her left hand on her back and a stick in her right, was after them at full speed, striking away and sparing none, until she was outstripped in the race. Then she stopped almost breathless, and called out:

"Nebber mind, you young rascals, I'll ketch you yet, and make you know how to come 'bout white folks' house makin' all dis racket."

After the tumult had subsided in the distance, Alfred remarked, laughingly:

"Well, Cousin Annie, I think if you undertake to civilize these barbarians, you will have but little time left for literary pursuits."

"I agree with you, and have often thought there was no class of persons whose duties were so onerous and so complicated as those of a Southern planter's wife. She must be mistress, maid, housekeeper, and nurse; besides, she must maintain her dignity as a lady, even while she is necessarily the companion and friend of the negroes, or they will neither respect nor obey her. If these qualities are not all concentrated in the person of the mistress, the whole establishment will be in constant turmoil and confusion. Still I hope for better days in future, and by exercising patience and perseverance, I may be able to train them to observe some degree of order and system, as they appear amiably disposed, and are willing to be taught by me. Indeed, they have improved astonishingly since we have had them in charge."

Dr. Clinton observed:

"They have never been accustomed to the attention of refined persons, and served Mrs. Grant through fear alone, but they seem devotedly attached to Annie and myself, and often annoy us with their attention. They appeal to us in every dilemma and on all occasions, that they may show their confidence and knowledge of our superior judgment. The negro having been controlled and thought for,

for generations past, is a mere child as regards mental vigor and activity. He succumbs readily to a superior intelligence, yields implicit obedience to the enlightened opinions of his owner, and manifests an abiding faith in his ability and willingness to watch over and protect him. It is this that secures and strengthens the strong feeling of attachment that exists between the master and servant, and tends to rendering his condition that of happiness and contentment."

They who understand the peculiarities of the negro character will readily assent to the truth of Dr. Clinton's observations; they who do not, have much to learn, in order to comprehend his nature and the influences that are brought to bear on him.

CHAPTER XXV.

Marriage is a matter of more worth
Than to be dealt in by attorneyship.

The treasures of the deep are not so precious
As the concealed comforts of man
Look'd up in woman's love.

THE glorious sunset had declined into the soft shadows of twilight, and silently the sparkling eyes of night glistened in the azure dome as the sonorous tones of the church-bell broke upon the stillness of the evening air, inviting a willing audience to assemble within the house of God.

The beautiful church was brilliantly illuminated, and soon filled with a gay and fashionable throng, among whom splendid costumes and sparkling jewels glittered with a thousand dies. Eager, expectant eyes were constantly turning toward the chief entrance, as if the object which attracted them to that consecrated place had not appeared.

At length the deep solemn notes of the organ reverberated through the vaulted roof, and there was a lull in the restless congregation, as a long and elegant bridal procession passed up the center aisle—then with alternate couples diverging to the right and left, formed a semicircle around the sacred altar.

The venerable Dr. Hall, with silvery locks and face beaming with benevolence and holy love, stood before them like some saintly priest of old, in majesty and dignity, as the guardian of the holy temple.

For a moment he gazed fondly on the fair young bride, and his bright eye glistened with a tear—his voice quavered with tender emotion as he placed the broad circlet of gold upon the small tapering finger of Lula Graham, his favorite pupil, whom he had tutored with loving care. Then, in the presence of God and the vast assemblage, he sealed her heart's contract with Charlie Herbert.

The eyes of the bridegroom dwelt proudly and fondly upon his beautiful bride, and as his fervent, manly response broke through the stillness of that crowded church, every heart present indorsed his sacred pledge to love and cherish the pure and priceless treasure which had been trustingly confided to his care and his honor.

Among the spectators there was a shrouded figure which darted lightning glances of deadly hatred from a pair of magnificent black eyes, and when friends rushed around the newly-wedded pair with blessings and congratulations, the veil was excitedly thrown aside from the face of that crouching form, disclosing the features of Julia Stanly distorted with envy, rage, and malice. From her heart came fierce imprecations upon the lovely bride who had won the affection of Charlie Herbert, thereby causing her to assume the woeful wreath, and accept the hand of one whose hoary locks were concealed by the artful dye which hides the frost of age, and whose willful, ill-tempered children were the bane and torment of her life.

Plato says "that the affections are as the wings and chariots of the wind, in which, if properly directed, we may, like Elias, be carried toward heaven; but if left to the guidance of inexperience and the evil passions, we may, Phaëton-like, be driven about madly and hurled headlong into ruin and destruction."

Julia had followed her evil passions, and was reaping the bitter fruit of her sinful folly. In giving away to impulse, she had, in an unguarded moment, betrayed her

duplicity to Charlie Herbert, and when, like Tantalus, she was reaching forth her hand for the coveted prize, it had eluded her grasp. Mortified and chagrined at her shameful exposure, she determined to accept the antiquated lover, whose golden charms would hide a multitude of faults, and dazzle with her splendor and magnificence the friends and companions of her youth.

But alas, for her brilliant, golden dreams! Her husband proved a miserly despot, and had exhausted his liberality in spreading a costly net and forging gilded chains for his beautiful captive. When this was accomplished, the mask was thrown aside, and he appeared in his true colors, showing himself a competent and experienced general—a strict disciplinarian, who required unconditional obedience and perfect submission on the part of her who had promised so lightly to love, honor, and obey until death should separate them.

His children had been humored and indulged to excess by injudicious relatives and friends of his former wife, who taught them to look with suspicion upon the young step-mother, and from the first poor Julia's best intention respecting them was doubted and repulsed.

Finally, she became weary and discouraged in her fruitless efforts to conciliate them, and gladly left these immortal jewels of a dead mother to their willful course.

She had returned on a visit to her childhood's home, a disappointed and unhappy wife, to pour out her anger and bitter grievances into the ear of her weak, doting mother, who regretted with sighs and tears that her beautiful daughter had sold herself for filthy lucre into a bondage most hateful and degrading.

Mrs. Stanly was totally unconscious of any existing cause for a personal dislike toward Charlie Herbert or Lula Graham, and wishing to divert the mind of her unhappy daughter from her personal affairs, insisted that

she should witness the marriage at church, which had for weeks past created an immense excitement in the community.

Julia was not averse to this plan, provided she could remain *incognito*; therefore, separating herself from the family party at the church door, and drawing a veil over her face, took a position behind one of the columns which supported the gallery, where she could see but remain unseen. There she sat, grinding her beautiful white teeth and clinching her hands until the nails were pressed into the tender flesh, listening in hopeless despair to the plighted vows of mutual love.

When Charlie Herbert and Lula Graham were pronounced husband and wife, the miserable Julia gave one faint, smothered cry and sprang to her feet; then like a hissing serpent did she send forth low curses from her vindictive heart upon the heads of the married pair.

As the *cortege* was leaving the church, she saw the young wife, in her innocence and dazzling beauty, look up to him who held her destiny for this world in his hands, and the glance was trusting and fearless, for the eyes that met her own so tenderly were noble and true.

The wretched woman, who crouched again beneath the shadows, knew that the gallant young man would peril his life to save his peerless bride from pain or sorrow.

Poor, miserable Julia! her own sad condition arose in painful contrast before her, and in mental anguish she cried:

“O God! It is more than I can bear! Let me die!”

Marriage is an institution of divine origin, ordained by God and sanctioned by Jesus Christ, whose first miracle was performed at Cana of Galilee, where he appeared to witness this holy bond of union between man and woman. Other contracts may be sundered by mutual consent of parties who form them, but the divine Lawgiver has for-

bidden the dissolution of that sacred tie which was formed in the garden of Eden before the tempter seduced man to his sinful state.

The holy mandate proclaims: "For this cause shall a man leave father and mother and shall cleave to his wife, and they twain shall be one flesh.

"Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder."

This bond is perpetual on earth, and nothing but crime or death can dissolve the connection.

Dr. Johnson says:

"Marriage is the strictest tie of perpetual friendship, and there can be no friendship without confidence, and no confidence without integrity; and he must expect to be wretched, who pays to beauty, riches, or politeness, that regard which only virtue and piety can claim."

Woe to those who from base and dishonorable motives will perjure themselves with sacred vows and false lips, hoping thereby to secure permanent pleasure or worldly aggrandizement! The vengeance of Heaven will fall with blighting force upon their guilty, sacrilegious hearts, and bring to naught such unholy schemes of happiness.

Let us leave the wretched, perjured Julia to the bitter, corroding reflections on her sinful folly, as with tear-stained face she pursues her homeward way, while the unspoken thought of that aching heart was,

A bird of free and careless wing,
Was I, through many a smiling spring;
But caught within the subtle snare
I burn and feebly flutter there.

* * * * *

As the sentinel on duty at the gates of Belvoir gave notice of approaching vehicles, the word of command was given in a loud magniloquent tone by some sable satellite

of the house, and hundreds of brilliant flaming torches, borne by black, stalwart forms, with shining rows of ivory between their vermilion lips, suddenly margined either side of the carriage-way and encircled the mansion.

The golden light flashed like magic about the elegant structure with its graceful verandas, and through the open windows, displaying the rich adornments of its interior, and over trees, flowers, shrubbery, and statuary. The waters of the stream and fountains caught the reflected light and sparkled like liquid silver, as it dropped into marble basins or dashed merrily over cascades, presenting a scene of enchanted beauty. Myriads of golden stars gleamed from the tranquil sky, but the magician's wand seemed to have touched the earth, and, for the moment, rendered it more gorgeously beautiful.

As the carriage containing the bridal pair entered the portal of their home, a loud simultaneous shout arose from the torch bearers, and was echoed from hill and dale.

"God bless young master and his beautiful bride!"

Then with stentorian voices they sang:

Strew the pathway with flow'rs,
And deck the lovely bow'rs,
For the young wedded pair,
Who are both good and fair.
Let blessings rich and rare
Come unburden'd with care,
On the groom and the bride
Whom we welcome with pride.
Oh! welcome, welcome home;
Fair bride and noble groom;
Oh! may you never roam,
From loving friends at home.

As Mr. Herbert listened to this unexpected and humble tribute of affectionate regard toward the young couple, from his faithful negroes, he remarked to his wife:

"This is quite an agreeable surprise, for which I suppose we are indebted to Robert, our efficient butler, as it has been arranged with his usual good taste and proper ideas of decorum."

"Yes, he is the prime mover and chief instrument in getting up this grand reception, and I rather suspect he is the poet-minstrel also, who has celebrated this auspicious event in our family, as his *penchant* for verse making is proverbial among Charlie's friends."

When Charlie's carriage drew up before the door, he sprang out, but before he could assist his bride in descending, he was besieged by an innumerable number of rough black hands, and forced to hear noisy, but heartfelt congratulations, that fell upon his ear like the confusion at the tower of Babel.

Before he could extricate himself from the grasp of his colored friends, Lula was taken from the carriage, folded in a pair of stout arms of dusky hue, and forcibly hurried into the house.

"Do you 'xpect I'm going to let you niggers devour this angel? If you do, you's mighty mistaken. You shan't put the weight of your hands on her to-night." Such was Betty's laughing remark, as she bore off her fair captive in triumph.

"That's right, Aunt Betty, for these plantation folks don't know the difference between Brussels lace and factory homespun, and were just ready to tear her to pieces, and she wouldn't have been fit to receive the company," was Lizzie's joyful observation. Turning to the disappointed and crest-fallen negroes, she added: "Now you all go and look in the drawing-room windows, and you'll see the bride come down presently like an angel from heaven."

The *femme de chambre's* suggestion was adopted, and they thronged around the doors and windows, watching

with delight every motion of the lovely bride, as she welcomed and received the congratulations of her dear "five hundred friends."

With graceful ease and composure she stood in their midst, arrayed in a robe of exquisite Brussels lace, which floated like a fleecy cloud over a soft Turkish satin of silvery brightness. A richly-wrought veil of the same gossamer texture as her dress was confined by a wreath of orange-buds and flowers, beneath which were seen the glossy ringlets that were rolled from her fair brow and gathered in a heavy mass behind the head—drooping over a neck and shoulders that would have rivaled the masterworks of Praxiteles and Canova. No jewels marred the ethereal purity of her dress; no diamonds save those which sparkled beneath the long silken lashes; no pearls save those that glistened between the ruby lips adorned her person; but fair and pure as a lily, before the first kiss of the morning sunbeam has robbed it of the dewy freshness, she appeared to her admiring friends.

As Charlie stood apart, gazing fondly and proudly on his lovely treasure, Robert Carlton approached, and throwing his arm over the shoulder of his friend, said:

"Ah, Herbert, you are indeed a happy fellow, and deservedly so! If my friendship for you did not equal that of Damon and Pythias, I could not have stood so calmly by and seen that glorious creature link her destiny with yours."

"Thank you, Robert! But if I mistake not, you would object more to Miss Clinton's bestowing her hand on any other than my noble friend, Dr. Carlton. I feel to-night as if some prophet's mantle had fallen on my shoulders, and I could lift the veil which hides the future from other eyes. There I see the love of Mary Clinton pouring sweet incense over your life, and twining garlands of peace, joy, and happiness around your heart, which is con-

tinually blessing and asking blessings on her who scattered

Roses of bliss on your thorn-covered way,
Roses of paradise sent from above.

My dear friend, happiness is within your grasp. Do not let it escape."

"She is indeed a prize worth winning; and I sincerely hope you may be correct in your predictions, for I have never seen but one other whom I wished to call my wife."

"If Miss Clinton will consent to unite her fate with yours, I will insure your future happiness; for it will then be established on a solid and immovable basis, which will defy and successfully repel the tempter's wiles.

"Dear Robert, take my advice and follow the dictates of your heart, and my word for it you will never regret the step."

"The temptation to do so is very powerful; but oh, Charlie, I fear the result may again drive me to despair!"

"'Faint heart never won fair lady,' was the reply, as they were suddenly interrupted by a request to repair to the banquet hall.

Gentle reader, the far-famed and generous hospitality of the South will justly condemn the writer if she should fail to introduce you to the sumptuous feast prepared for this occasion, the profusion and elegance of which would have caused Cleopatra to blush with mortification for the *untasteful coarseness* of her entertainments to Mark Antony. Cicero and Pompey would have refused a second invitation to sup with Lucullus if they had been favored with a sight of this delightful repast; and the guests of Caligula would have turned with disgust from his valuable pearls dissolved in vinegar, to have partaken of the lus-

cious strawberries smothered in cream, which were heaped in crystal stands over the festive board that literally groaned under its luxurious burden. There were the boned turkeys and oysters; hams which surpassed in flavor the famous Westphalia's; juicy tongues, sardines, lobsters, and salmon; fowls and game of every description; barbecued pigs which constituted the special pride and delight of our friend Joe, the chief *cuisinier* at Belvoir. Delicious salads, that

Would tempt the dying anchorite to eat;
Back to the world he'd turn his fleeting soul,
And plunge his fingers in the salad bowl.

Pyramids of jelly, that vied in hue with bright, transparent rubies and pale amber; exquisite fairy-like temples formed of crystallized oranges, and decorated with dark-green leaves of the same golden fruit; pine-apples of delicious aroma; apples, pears, and the famous Chinese peaches, the latter of which were of a size, flavor, and juiciness unsurpassed, and of miraculous weight. Luscious grapes of various kinds—fresh white, purple, and black figs, placed on large silver *epergnes*, were conspicuous among this rare and tempting profusion, as was "the blest sherbet sublimed with snow," and towers of ice-cream, of unique mould and lovely proportion. Rich cakes, of every form and variety, were covered with a delicate frosting of wreaths and bouquets, that, in their pure and artistic beauty, appeared as if Flora alone had designed them for the bridal feast.

But confident that no description can do justice to this elegant repast, which was worthy of the luxurious Romans or their gods, your attention is invited to the magnificent display of flowers that decorated the tables, from which arose delicious perfumes that would have sufficed to regale the voluptuous senses of Nero or Heliogabulus. If, as some

among the Greeks and Romans believe, the odor of flowers will counteract the effect of wine and brighten the action of the brain, we doubt not that on this occasion the guests were amply fortified against the effect of the rich, rare, and sparkling wines that were freely offered to them by the hospitable proprietor of Belvoir.

Later in the evening, when Robert Carlton approached Mary Clinton, her tell-tale blushes and modest, winning smile indicated to other eyes than Charlie Herbert's where she had placed her affection.

Robert said, in speaking of this meeting afterwards:

"Then through my brain the thought did pass,
Even as a flash of lightning there,
That there was something in her air
Which would not doom me to despair;
And on the thought my words broke forth,
All incoherent as they were—
Their eloquence was little worth,
But yet she listen'd—'tis enough—
Who listens once will listen twice;
Her heart, be sure, is not of ice."

Then he added:

"I loved, and was beloved again,
In sooth it is a happy doom."

Some days after the wedding, during a confidential tête-à-tête with his sister, Robert Carlton informed her of his engagement with Mary Clinton, but regretted that he was forced to serve out a twelvemonth's probation, according to the doctor's urgent request. Then Alice, who had doffed her widow's weeds, and was looking as bright and cheerful as in the happy days of her girlhood, blushinglly acknowledged that Alfred Raymond had won her heart, with a promise of her hand at some future day. She con-

fessed that once before, without a moment's reflection, and in a paroxysm of delirious excitement, she had resigned herself to the keeping of another; but as that person had proved himself unworthy of respect, she soon repented of her folly.

Now, in justice to Alfred and herself, she had determined not to enter into the sacred covenant of matrimony again, without proper reflection and due deliberation.

Robert caught her in his arms, pressed her to his bosom, and exclaimed:

"I thank God it is so, my darling sister! Now I can take you freely to my heart again, and Alfred Raymond's honored name will blot all remembrance of your former error. God bless you, my sweet sister! You have indeed won a glorious prize, and I am impatient to receive him as a brother."

In due time the two weddings were celebrated with customary splendor, and in witnessing the happiness of their children, Mr. and Mrs. Carlton thanked the Lord, who had blessed their latter days more than the beginning, and ascribed all praise and glory to Him who giveth every good and perfect gift.

"These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

Such was the happy condition of affairs in our favored land, when the trumpets,

Those clamorous harbingers of blood and death,

proclaimed the existence of war between the North and South.

We forbear to speak of the causes that produced the long and sanguinary struggle—of the trials and hardships

endured by our people—the brilliant victories won by our gallant troops against overwhelming numbers—the destruction of life and property, and the poverty entailed upon our children. Suffice it to say our cause was lost; and truly did the bard of Olney speak when he said:

The State that strives for liberty, though foiled,
And forced to abandon what she bravely sought,
Deserves at least applause for her attempt,
And pity for her loss.

The scenes depicted in the foregoing pages are true, as every native Southerner well knows. The pictures of wealth and hospitality may hereafter be referred to in history, poetry, and song. The confidence and familiarity that once existed between the master and servant—the happy condition of the latter, as shown prior to the war, together with the delightful associations connected with plantation life—belong to the past and will never be revived.

That was a beautiful system of worship among the ancients, that converted every grove, every fountain, and every rock into the dwelling of a Nymph, a Naiad, or a God. Almost every object was assigned to the guardianship of some supernatural being, and the romantic associations connected with them by the people of antiquity afford a delightful theme for contemplation.

Let our associations of our country be those of holy remembrance—let our historians, orators, and poets invest every hill, valley, and dell, from the Potomac to the Rio Grande, with hallowed feelings, and remember that Pliny is still read with delight, that the soul-stirring appeals of Tully are yet echoed over the hills of Italy, and that the stanzas of Tasso are not forgotten in Venice.

The present condition of the South gives rise to feelings of mistrust and discontent, causing the thoughtful to pause and reflect as to what the future may reveal; and many have thought of abandoning the haunts of youth, and seeking an asylum abroad.

To such I would say, Beware! forsake not the inheritance of your fathers. The exiled Swiss becomes melancholy and depressed when he hears the Rans-de-Vache of his Fatherland; and should the spirit-stirring notes of Dixie greet your ears on foreign shores, you, too, will sigh for the home of your heart—your native land.

Though the clouds of anarchy and strife now lower and darken the political horizon, though you are bound like Ixion to the wheel, and condemned like Sisyphus to roll a stone to the mountain's top, put your trust in Him who does all things well, and hope for the time when the land of our birth may rear its head proudly above the other powers of the earth—when she will exhibit to an admiring world a government lovely in its proportion and symmetrical in its parts—one in which the States will revolve in their respective orbits, in a manner as grand and as magnificent as Herschel's dance of the Sidereal system.

ENTERTAINING NEW BOOKS

Published by J. B. LIPPINCOTT & Co., Philadelphia.

Will be sent by Mail, post-paid, on receipt of price.

THE WHITE ROSE.

A Novel. By G. J. WHYTE MELVILLE, author of "Cerise," "Digby Grand," "The Gladiators," etc. 12mo. Cloth. \$1.50.

"The book abounds in beautiful sentiments, beautifully expressed, and its moral tone is undeniably good. We take pleasure in commending it to the public."—*Phila. Ev. Bulletin*.

THE OLD MAM'SELLE'S SECRET.

A Novel. After the German of E. Marlitt. By Mrs. A. L. WISTER. 12mo. Fine cloth. \$1.75.

THE VOICE IN SINGING.

Translated from the German of EMMA SMILER by a Member of the American Philosophical Society. One vol. 12mo. Tinted paper. Fine cloth, beveled boards. \$1.50.

"We would earnestly advise all interested in any way in the vocal organs to read and thoroughly digest this remarkable work."—*Boston Musical Times*.

ABRAHAM PAGE, ESQ.

A Novel. "Pity the sorrows of a poor old man." 12mo. Tinted paper. Cloth. \$1.50.

WALDEMAR KRONE.

The Story of Waldemar Krone's Youth. By H. F. EWALD, author of "The Nordby Family," "Johannes Falk," etc. Translated from the Danish. One vol. 12mo. Neat cloth. \$1.75.

"Since reading 'Quits' and the 'Initials,' we have met with few more interesting books. . . . It claims unwearied attention from beginning to end, and shows no ordinary power."—*Phila. Ev. Bulletin*.

FIGHTING THE FLAMES.

A Tale of the Fire Brigade. By R. M. BALLANTYNE, author of "The Wild Man of the West," "The Coral Islands," "The Red Eric," etc. With Illustrations. 12mo. Cloth. \$1.50.

"An interesting and spirited little work. Mr. Ballantyne is well known as a popular writer for youth, and his present work does not detract from his reputation."—*Phila. Ev. Telegraph*.

OLD DECCAN DAYS;

Or, Hindoo Fairy Legends current in Southern India. Collected from Oral Tradition By M. FRERE. With an Introduction and Notes by SIR BARTLE FRERE. 12mo.

SILVER LAKE;

Or, Lost in the Snow. By R. M. BALLANTYNE, author of "Fighting the Flames," "The Coral Islands," etc. Illustrated. 12mo.

VALUABLE WORKS

Published by J. B. LIPPINCOTT & CO., Philadelphia.

Will be sent by Mail, post-paid, on receipt of price.

THE AMERICAN BEAVER and his WORKS.

By LEWIS H. MORGAN, author of "The League of the Iroquois." Handsomely illustrated with 28 full-page lithographs and numerous wood-cuts. One vol. 8vo. Tinted paper. Cloth extra. \$5.00.

"We have read Mr. Morgan's elaborate but most lucidly written volume with intense delight and full satisfaction."—*Boston Ec. Transcript.*

DIXON'S SPIRITUAL WIVES.

By W. HEPPWORTH DIXON, author of "New America," "William Penn," "The Holy Land," etc. **SECOND EDITION.** Complete in one crown 8vo. volume. With Portrait of Author from Steel. Tinted paper. Extra cloth. \$2.50.

"The subject of 'Spiritual Wives' is at once sensational, appalling, and full of deep interest. If we look at it simply as a system, it is replete with scenes which cannot be surpassed even in fiction."—*London Morning Post.*

U. S. CHRISTIAN COMMISSION.

Annals of the United States Christian Commission. By Rev. LEMUEL MOSS, Home Secretary to the Commission. In one vol. 8vo. of 752 pages. Handsomely illustrated. Tinted paper. Cloth extra. \$4.50.

LETTERS FROM THE FRONTIERS.

Written during a period of Thirty Years' Service in the U. S. Army. By MAJ.-GEN. GEORGE A. MCCALL, late Commander of the Pennsylvania Reserve Corps. One vol. crown 8vo. Toned paper. Fine cloth. \$2.50.

"His letters in the volume before us include a period of over thirty years of active service in Florida, the West, the Mexican War, and New Mexico. They are admirably written—easy, familiar, graphic, anecdotal, descriptive, and full of information. It seems as if the gallant writer was as much master of the pen as of the sword."—*Phila. Press.*

BAKER'S ABYSSINIA.

The Nile Tributaries of Abyssinia, and the Sword Hunters of the Hamran Arabs. By SIR SAMUEL WHITE BAKER, author of "The Albert Nyanza." With Maps and numerous Illustrations, drawn by E. Griset from Original Sketches by the Author. Superfine paper. One vol. royal 8vo. Extra cloth. \$6.00.

"We have rarely met with a descriptive work so well conceived and so attractively written as Baker's Abyssinia, and we cordially recommend it to public patronage. . . . It is beautifully illustrated, and contains several well-executed maps of great value."—*N. O. Times.*



